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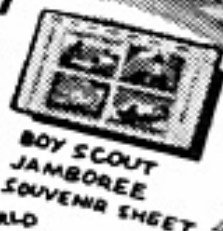
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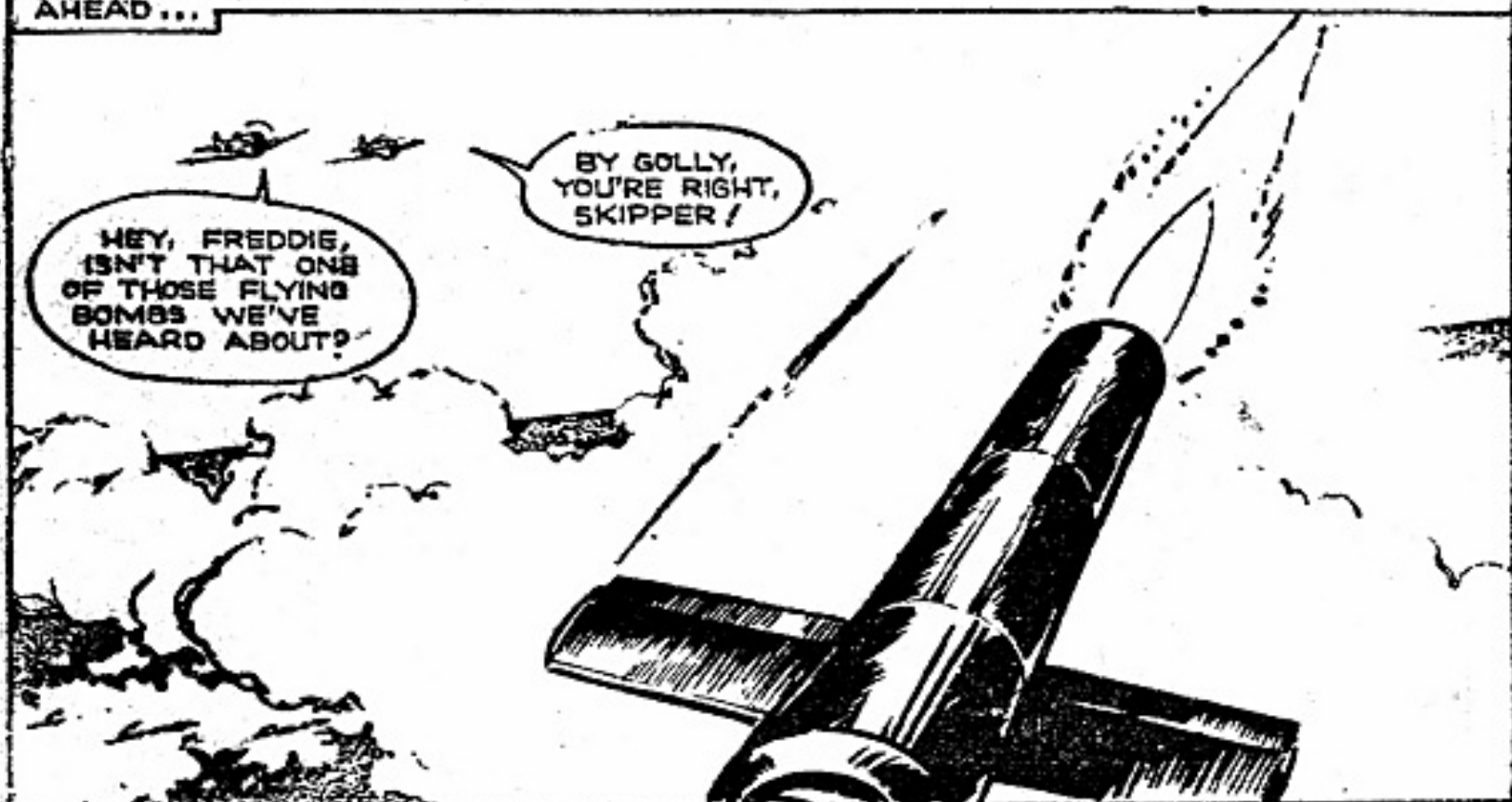
AS EARLY AS 1942, THE NAZI LEADER, ADOLF HITLER, DEMANDED FROM HIS SCIENTISTS A LONG-RANGE ROBOT WEAPON WITH WHICH HE COULD STRIKE AT LONDON AND COMPEL ENGLAND TO SUE FOR PEACE.



BY JUNE 1944, WAR-BATTERED LONDON AND THE SOUTH-EASTERN COUNTIES WERE ROCKED AFRESH BY A FORM OF BOMBARDMENT NEVER BEFORE SEEN BY MANKIND — THE GERMAN V1 FLYING BOMB ... A BLIND, PILOTLESS KILLER IN THE SKY ...

Chapter 1. Wave of Terror

ONE OF THE FIRST TO SEE THIS AWESOME NEW WEAPON WAS SQUADRON LEADER TIM MURRAY OF 958 TEMPEST SQUADRON, OUT ON CHANNEL PATROL WITH ONE OF HIS PILOTS, MURRAY'S EYE WAS CAUGHT BY A FLEETING OBJECT AHEAD...



EVERY PILOT BY NOW HAD BEEN BRIEFED WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE FLYING BOMB, BUT TO TIM MURRAY AND FLIGHT LIEUTENANT FREDDIE SAWYER, THE REAL THING WAS MORE INTERESTING!



THANKS TO A HEAD WIND WHICH REDUCED THE FLYING BOMB'S SPEED, THE TEMPESTS WERE ABLE TO COME ALONGSIDE.

YEAH, TRIMMED WITH A TWO THOUSAND POUND WARHEAD!

YOU'VE GOT TO ADMIT IT, SKIP, IT'S A TRIM LITTLE CRAFT!



THEY HAD THE INFORMATION THEY NEEDED. TIM DROPPED BEHIND AND GAVE THE V.I. A LONG BURST. HIS EYE CAUGHT THE BRIGHT WINK AS BULLETS RICOCHETED FROM THE SCUDDING ROBOT. THEN ...

IT'S A PIECE OF CAKE, SKIPPER!



THE V.I. EXPLODED WITH A BLINDING FLASH.
TOO LATE, TIM KNEW HE HAD FIRED AT
TOO CLOSE RANGE...



INSTANTLY HIS TEMPEST WAS A FLAMING
TORCH, ITS ENGINE FILLING THE TUMBLING
SKY WITH A DREAD DEATH-WHINE.



GOT TO BALE
OUT! BUT THE
SLIPSTREAM'S
TOO STRONG!

WITH THE BRUTAL STRENGTH OF
DESPAIR, TIM FOUGHT FREE OF HIS
PLANE — AND THEN REMEMBERED
NOTHING MORE THAN THE SOUND OF
HIS PARACHUTE SNAPPING OPEN.



THE JARRING SHOCK OF THE PLUNGE INTO THE SEA STUNG HIM TO PAINFUL CONSCIOUSNESS. FREDDIE SAWYER WAS THUMPING THE EMERGENCY BUTTON ON HIS RADIO...



THANKS TO HIS FLIGHT-COMMANDER'S PROMPT CALL, TIM MURRAY WAS PICKED UP AND RUSHED TO HOSPITAL WHERE THE CHEERY FREDDIE WAS HIS FIRST VISITOR...



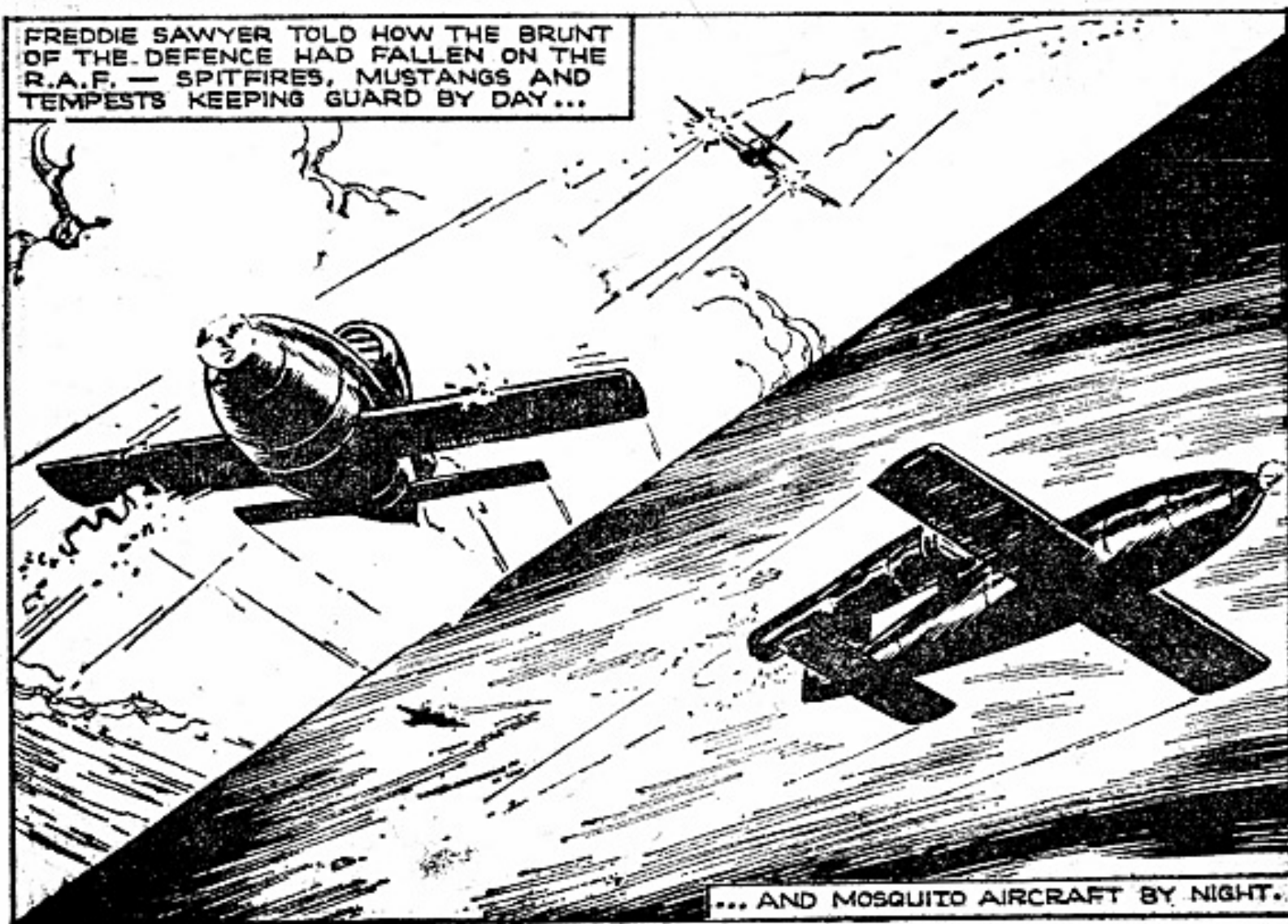
PRETTY THICK!
ABOUT A HUNDRED
A DAY!

WHAT ARE
WE DOING
ABOUT IT?



TIM'S CURT QUESTION CUT THE
VISITOR'S GRIN SHORT.

FREDDIE SAWYER TOLD HOW THE BRUNT
OF THE DEFENCE HAD FALLEN ON THE
R.A.F. — SPITFIRES, MUSTANGS AND
TEMPESTS KEEPING GUARD BY DAY...



... AND MOSQUITO AIRCRAFT BY NIGHT.

FREDDIE WAS A HAPPY-GO-LUCKY TYPE, BUT OVER ONE THING HE WAS QUITE SERIOUS. 'D' DAY HAD COME AND GONE, MOST FIGHTER SQUADRONS HAD MOVED TO THE AIRSTRIPS IN NORMANDY... BUT NOT 958 TEMPEST SQUADRON.

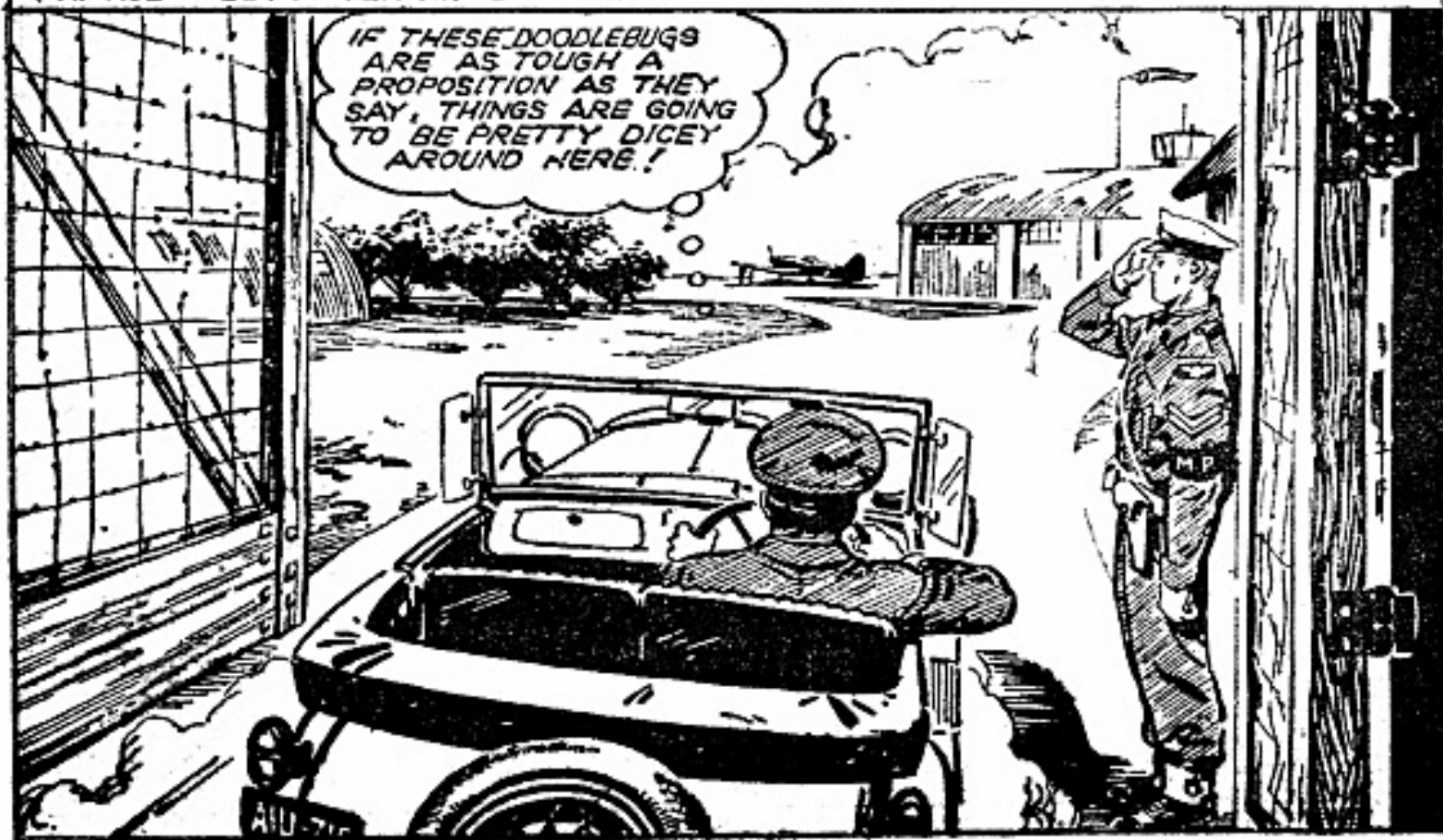
STILL NO NEWS OF US GOING TO FRANCE, SKIP?

NO, FREDDIE. I'LL PUT IN ANOTHER REQUEST FOR A MOVE...



AFTER TWO WEEKS, TIM MURRAY RETURNED FIT TO R.A.F. STATION FERNDOWN IN HAMPSHIRE. HE HAD BEEN AS EAGER AS ANY OF HIS PILOTS TO GET TO FRANCE - BUT AFTER HIS BOUT WITH THE FLYING BOMB HE WAS NOT SO SURE....

IF THESE DOODLEBUGS ARE AS TOUGH A PROPOSITION AS THEY SAY, THINGS ARE GOING TO BE PRETTY DICEY AROUND HERE!



JUST HOW BAD THE V.I. MENACE HAD BECOME, TIM FOUND OUT FROM HIS STATION COMMANDER, GROUP CAPTAIN BATEMAN.

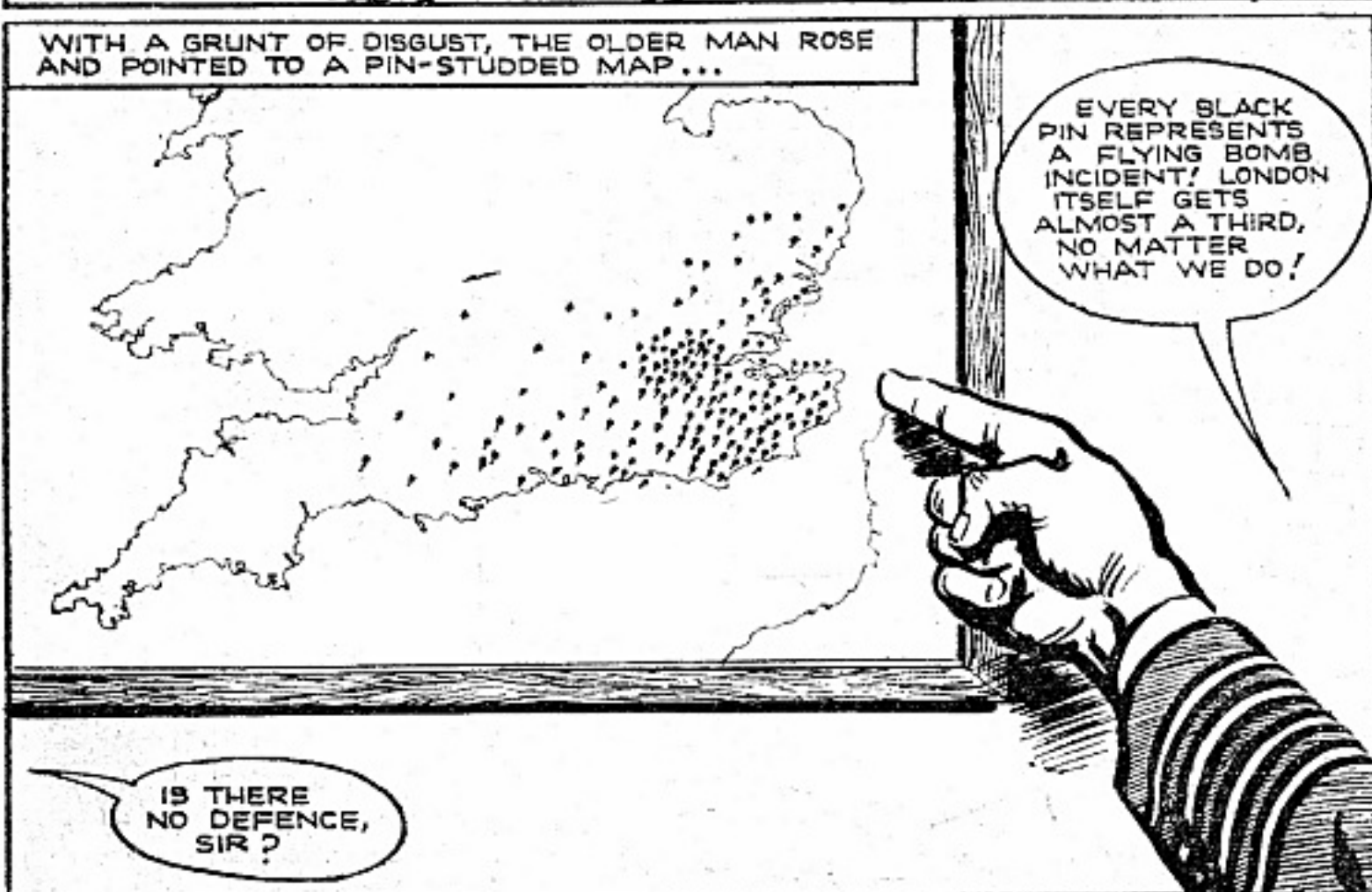
ABOUT A HUNDRED OF THESE THINGS ARRIVE EVERY TWENTY-FOUR HOURS. ONE DAY, THERE WERE TWO HUNDRED. I'LL SHOW YOU, TIM...



WITH A GRUNT OF DISGUST, THE OLDER MAN ROSE AND POINTED TO A PIN-STUDDED MAP...

EVERY BLACK PIN REPRESENTS A FLYING BOMB INCIDENT! LONDON ITSELF GETS ALMOST A THIRD, NO MATTER WHAT WE DO!


IS THERE NO DEFENCE, SIR?



TIM'S TERSE QUESTION WAS ANSWERED GRAPHICALLY. GROUP CAPTAIN BATEMAN DESCRIBED THE FIRST RUSH LAUNCHING OF TWO THOUSAND EXTRA BARRAGE BALLOONS TO SCREEN VULNERABLE LONDON...



...THEN THE DEFENSIVE RING OF QUICK-FIRING BOFORS GUNS...



...ON THE SOUTH-EASTERN COAST, THE INCREDIBLE SALVOES OF THE ROCKET-FIRING BATTERIES...

...AND THE MOST POTENT WEAPON OF ALL, THE 3.7 INCH ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS...

SUCH WERE THE IMMENSE GROUND DEFENCES ARRAYED AGAINST HITLER'S FLYING TERROR, THE V.I. BOMB. AND EVEN SO, THIS WAS NOT ENOUGH!

THE GROUP CAPTAIN TURNED TO THE SQUADRON'S OWN RECORD...

TODAY, TIM, YOUR SQUADRON TOPPED THE LIST FOR SHOOTING DOWN THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF FLYING BOMBS. BUT COMPETITION IS FIERCE, ESPECIALLY FROM MIKE CASEY'S MOSQUITO SQUADRON!

I'LL HAVE TO CHOKE THAT CANADIAN OFF, SIR!

THAT NIGHT, TIM AND FREDDIE SAWYER STROLLED ON TO THE AIRFIELD TO WATCH THE NIGHT-FLYING MOSQUITOES TO 842 SQUADRON RETURN FROM THEIR PATROL...

THIS MUST BE MIKE CASEY...

ANY NEWS ABOUT THE POSTING TO FRANCE, SKIPPER?

MIKE PRETENDED NOT TO HEAR FREDDIE'S QUESTION OVER THE THUNDERING MERLIN ENGINES OF THE 'MOSQUITO'...

MIKE CASEY LANDED SMOOTHLY. HE JUMPED DOWN FROM HIS PLANE AND WALKED OVER TO HIS TWO RIVALS...

HOW ARE YOU, TIM... GLAD TO SEE YOU AGAIN!

GOOD TO BE BACK, MIKE. HOW'S THE FLYING BOMB BUSINESS?

A MISCHIEVOUS GRIN SPREAD OVER THE CANADIAN'S RUGGED FACE.

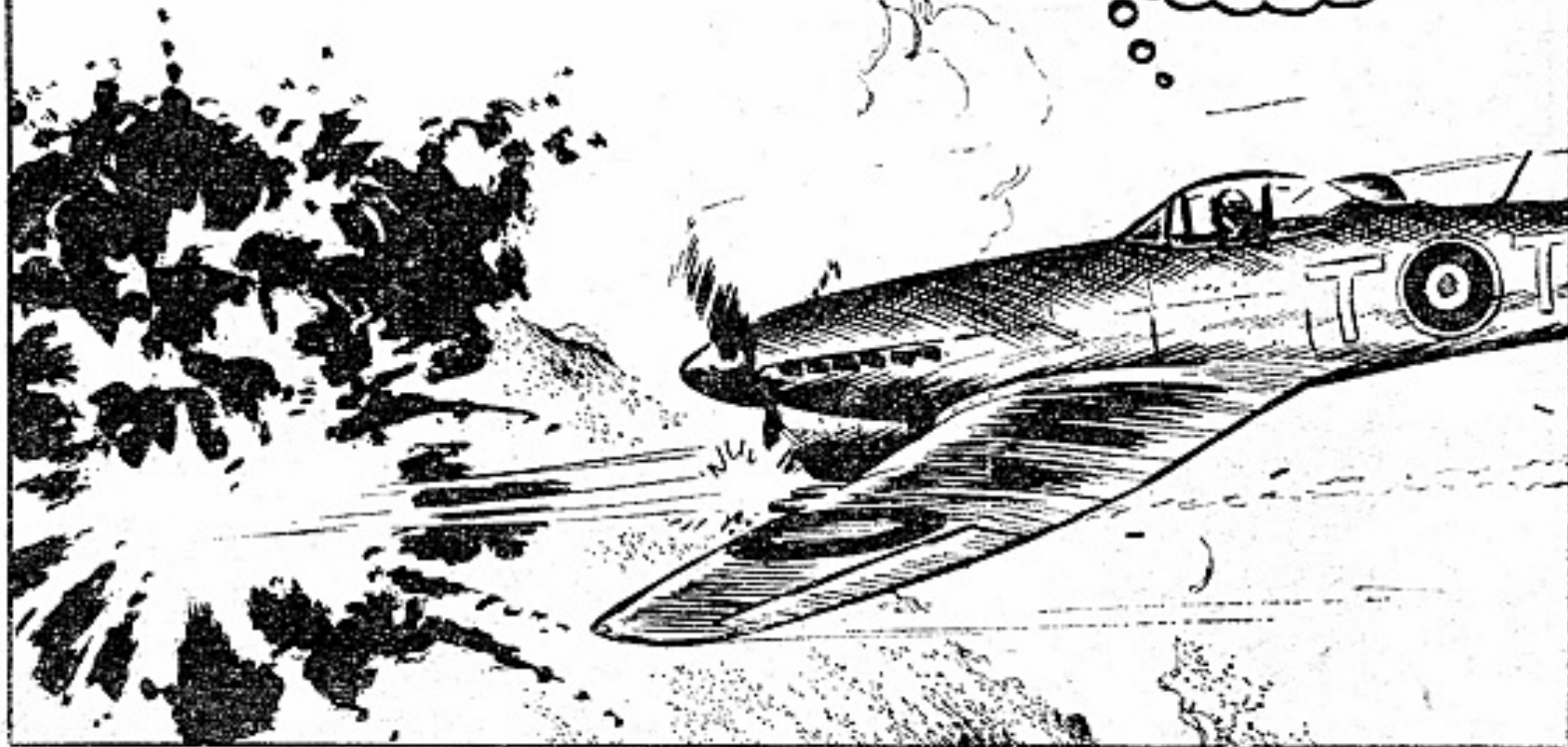
BOY, I WAS REALLY FLIPPIN' TONIGHT—I GOT FOUR! THAT MAKES OUR SQUADRON SCORE ABOUT EVEN WITH YOURS!

YOU TEMPEST BOYS WILL HAVE TO SHARPEN UP A BIT IF YOU WANT TO KEEP IN THE RUNNING, TIM!

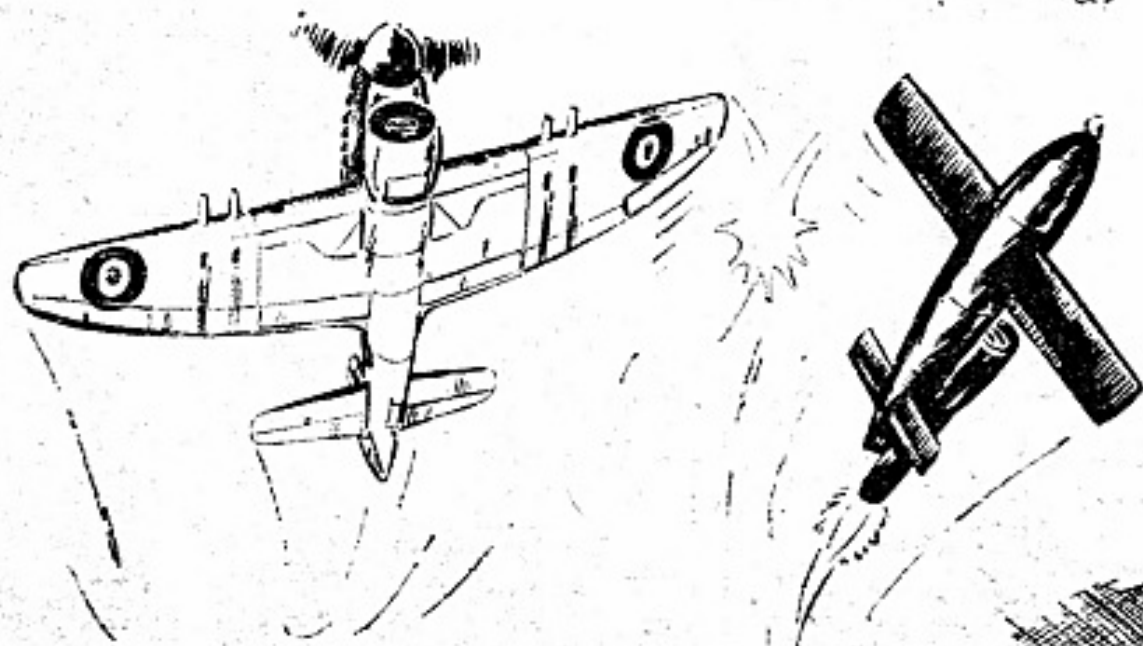
BOLONEY! WE'LL TOP YOUR SCORE BEFORE BREAKFAST!

SURE ENOUGH, TIM MURRAY WAS AIRBORNE BRIGHT AND EARLY, WITH A HOSTILE EYE FOR FLYING BOMBS...

I'M GETTING THE HANG OF IT... A SHARP DIVE ON THE STERN DOES THE TRICK!

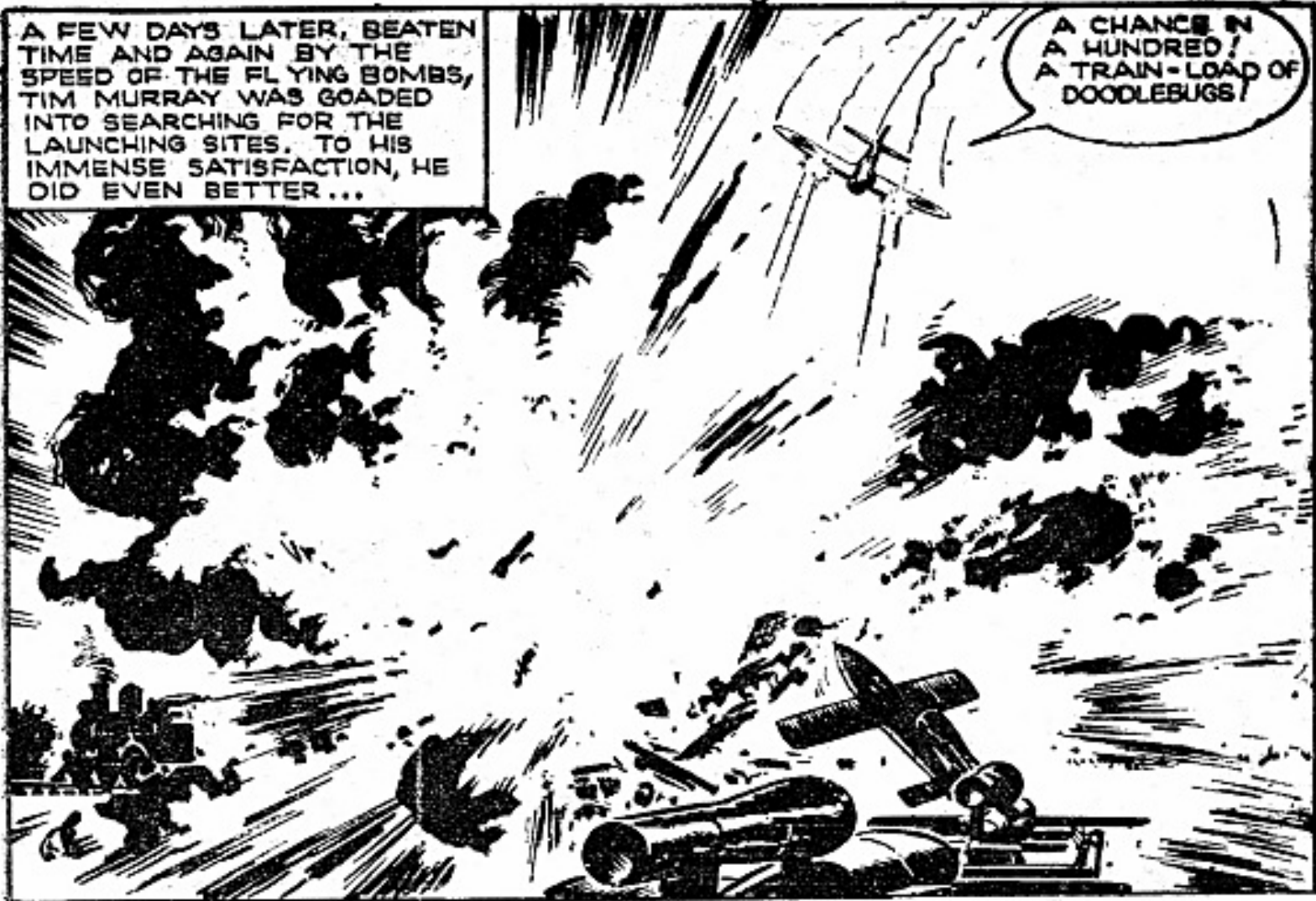


TIM WAS LEARNING FAST THAT STANDARD FIGHTER DRILL WAS USELESS AGAINST THESE FANTASTIC FLYING BOMBS. SOON HE HAD MASTERED THE POPULAR PRACTICE OF TIPPING THE ROBOT'S WING WITH HIS OWN, SENDING IT HEADLONG TO THE SEA BELOW...



A FEW DAYS LATER, BEATEN TIME AND AGAIN BY THE SPEED OF THE FLYING BOMBS, TIM MURRAY WAS GOADED INTO SEARCHING FOR THE LAUNCHING SITES. TO HIS IMMENSE SATISFACTION, HE DID EVEN BETTER...

A CHANCE IN A HUNDRED!
A TRAIN-LOAD OF
DOODLEBUGS!



THIS BIT OF LUCK CALLED FOR A CELEBRATION, SO THAT EVENING, THE MESS RANG WITH GOOD CHEER. MIKE CASEY CAME UP TO TIM AND FREDDIE SAWYER WITH A RUEFUL LOOK...

TARNATION, TIM, AIN'T YOU SATISFIED WITH ONE DOODLEBUG AT A TIME!



I'M CHEESED OFF WITH DOODLEBUGS! I'D SOONER BE IN FRANCE. THAT'S WHERE WE'LL SOON BE, EH, SKIPPER?

NOW THAT THE QUESTION WAS PUT TO HIM DIRECTLY, TIM FOUND HIMSELF STILL UNCERTAIN...

I-I'M NOT SO SURE, FREDDIE. STRIKES ME WE'RE DOING A PRETTY GOOD JOB HERE.

SPOKEN IN A SUDDEN SILENCE, TIM'S WORDS REACHED EVERY CORNER OF THE ROOM. INSTANTLY, HE WAS ASSAILED BY INDIGNANT CRIES...

NOT GOING TO FRANCE?

YOU PROMISED US, SKIPPER!

COME OFF IT, TIM!

IT WAS CLEAR TIM MURRAY'S VIEWS WERE NOT POPULAR WITH THE REST OF THE SQUADRON...

Chapter 2. Project PLUTO!

BADGERED BY HIS EAGER PILOTS, TIM MURRAY WENT TO GROUP HEADQUARTERS TO SEE AIR VICE-MARSHAL CORBY. HE FOUND THE A.O.C. SHORT-SPOKEN BUT NOT UNSYMPATHETIC...

SO FAR, MURRAY, I'VE REFUSED YOUR REQUESTS FOR A POSTING TO FRANCE. HOWEVER, I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO.

THANK YOU, SIR. THE BOYS ARE KEEN FOR SOME REAL FIGHTING.



MIKE CASEY ALSO HAD BUSINESS AT GROUP AND THE TWO RETURNED TO FERNDOWN TOGETHER. MIKE HID HIS SECRET REGRET AT THE PROSPECT OF LOSING TIM UNDER A CLOAK OF SCATHING COMMENT...

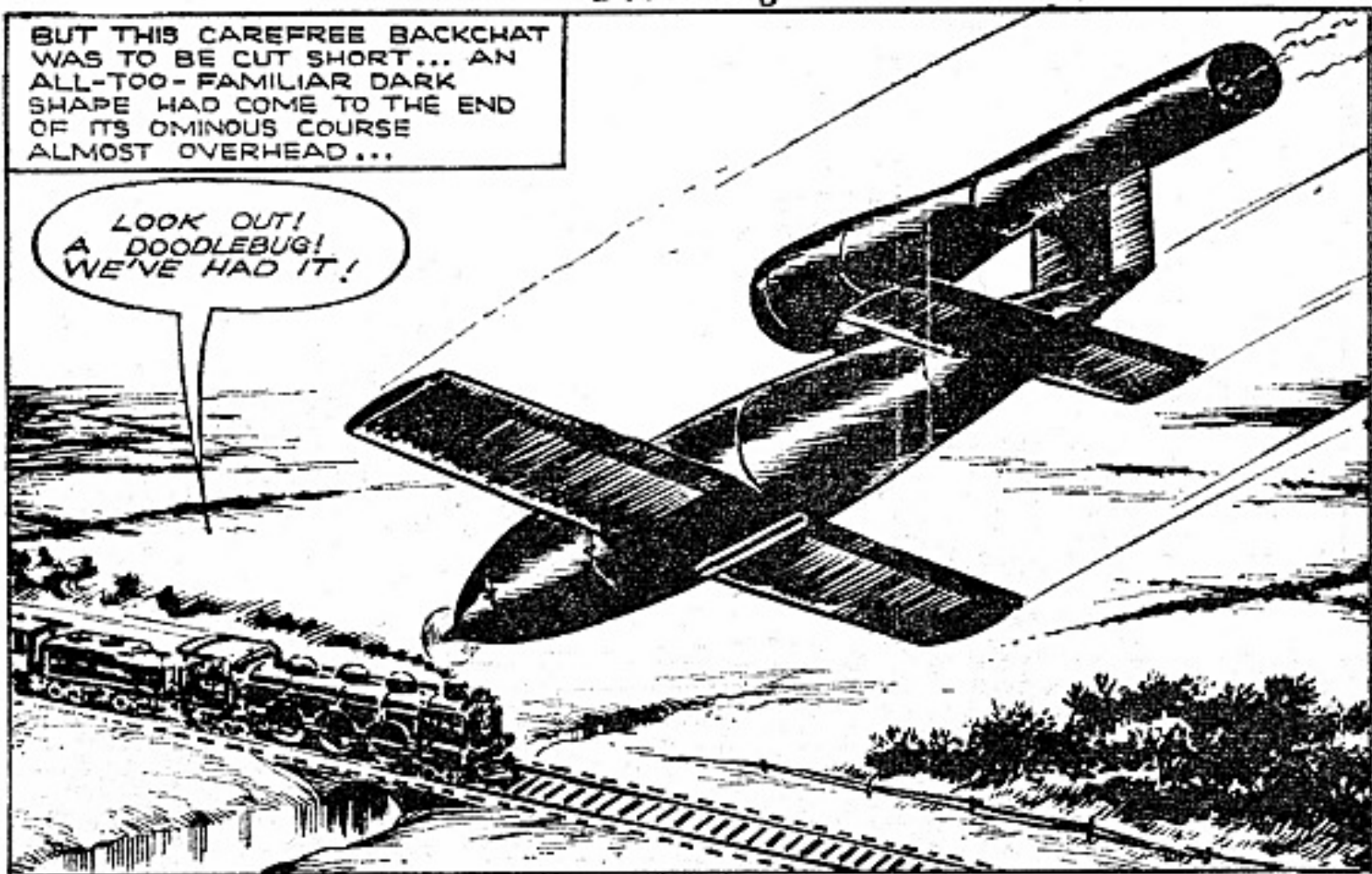
GO TO FRANCE! ... SLEEP IN A TENT! ... YOU MUST BE CRAZY!

NOW DON'T GET ENVIOUS, MIKE!

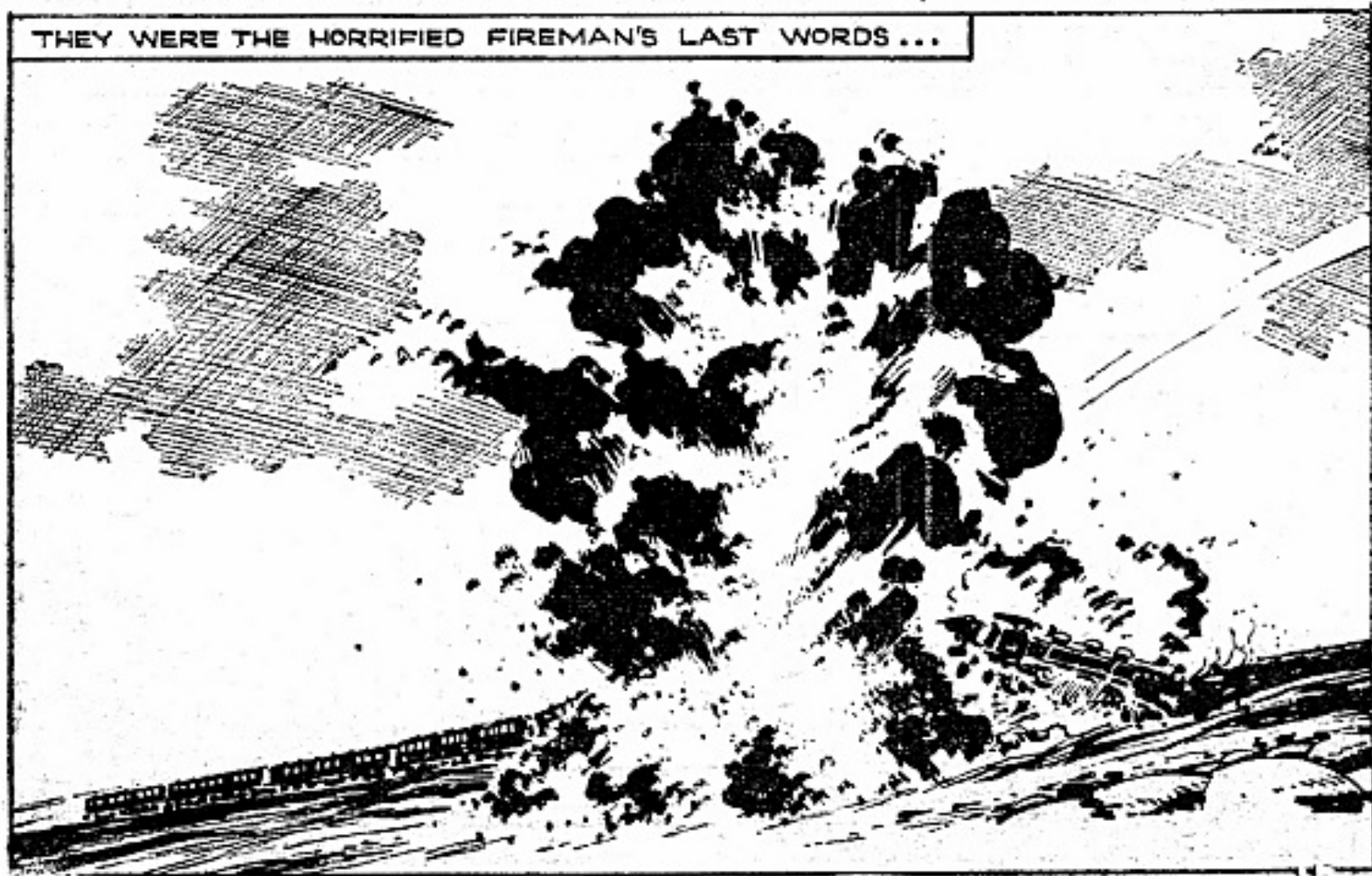


BUT THIS CAREFREE BACKCHAT
WAS TO BE CUT SHORT... AN
ALL-TOO-FAMILIAR DARK
SHAPE HAD COME TO THE END
OF ITS OMINOUS COURSE
ALMOST OVERHEAD...

LOOK OUT!
A DOODLEBUG!
WE'VE HAD IT!



THEY WERE THE HORRIFIED FIREMAN'S LAST WORDS...



CRIES OF THE INJURED MINGLED WITH THE ROAR OF ESCAPING STEAM. SHAKEN AND BRUISED, TIM CLIMBED OUT OF THE SHATTERED COACH AND GAVE MIKE A HAND.

THIS IS TERRIBLE!

COME ON, MIKE, THERE'S WORK TO DO!



TIM AND MIKE LABOURED, WITH OTHERS, TO RELEASE THOSE TRAPPED. THEN, PROTESTING, THE TWO R.A.F. MEN WERE DRIVEN TO A NEARBY HOSPITAL.

I SUPPOSE THESE FLYING BOMBS KEEP YOU PEOPLE BUSY?

THIS PLACE IS JUST CRAMMED WITH PEOPLE WHO'VE BEEN INJURED BY THEM.



BUT AS THE TWO PILOTS LEFT,
ANOTHER SHOCK SET THE
SEAL ON THAT HORROR-
FILLED DAY. THE HOSPITAL
ITSELF FELL VICTIM TO
A FLYING BOMB!

LOOK OUT!

WHAT
THE ...



HALF-STUNNED BY THE EXPLOSION, THEIR EARS FILLED WITH THE DREAD
CRACKLE OF FLAMES, TIM AND MIKE ROCKED ON THEIR FEET.

THIS ISN'T WAR...
IT'S MURDER!

I CAN'T WAIT
TO GET BACK
INTO THE AIR!



DEEPLY AFFECTED BY WHAT HE HAD SEEN ON THAT ILL-FATED DAY, TIM MURRAY RETURNED TO THE MESS AT FERNDOWN A CHANGED MAN... AS HIS SQUADRON WAS TO LEARN WITH DISMAY...



FOR THE SOCIABLE TIM, THE NEXT FEW DAYS WERE DIFFICULT... HE WAS IGNORED BY HIS DISAPPOINTED SQUADRON. WORRIEDLY, HE TALKED IT OVER WITH THE UNDERSTANDING STATION COMMANDER.

LIKE ALL LEADERS, TIM, YOU'VE HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN WHAT'S RIGHT AND POPULAR APPROVAL. STICK IT OUT... YOU'LL COME THROUGH!

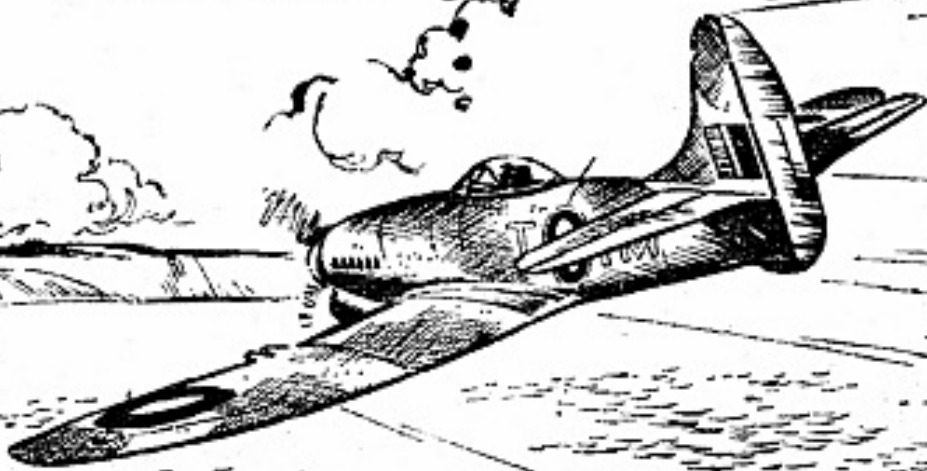
I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT, SIR.

DESPITE EVERY SORT OF DEFENCE, THESE FLYING BOMBS ARE GETTING WORSE. WE'LL NEED EVERY PLANE WE'VE GOT...

I'M SURE THE BOYS WILL PITCH IN, SIR.

WITH SOME MUTTERING DISSATISFACTION, THE MEN OF 958 TEMPEST SQUADRON CONTINUED THE FIGHT AGAINST THE FLYING BOMBS. WORRIED BY REPORTS OF MOUNTING CIVILIAN CASUALTIES, TIM ONCE MORE VENTURED OVER ENEMY-HELD FRANCE.

MAYBE I CAN SPOT ANOTHER TRAIN LOAD OF DOODLEBUGS.



AS THE BROAD CARPET OF FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE SPUN SLOWLY BELOW, A SUDDEN FIERCE BURST OF ACK-ACK FIRE ROUSED HIS CURIOSITY.

WHY ARE THE JERRIES SO KEEN TO KEEP ME AWAY FROM THAT WOOD? I'LL TAKE A LOOK!



IGNORING THE SHELL-BURSTS, TIM DROPPED TO A LOWER LEVEL. WHAT HE DISCOVERED WAS USEFUL, BUT NOT SURPRISING...

ANOTHER FLYING BOMB LAUNCHING SITE, EH... LOOKS NEW, TOO!



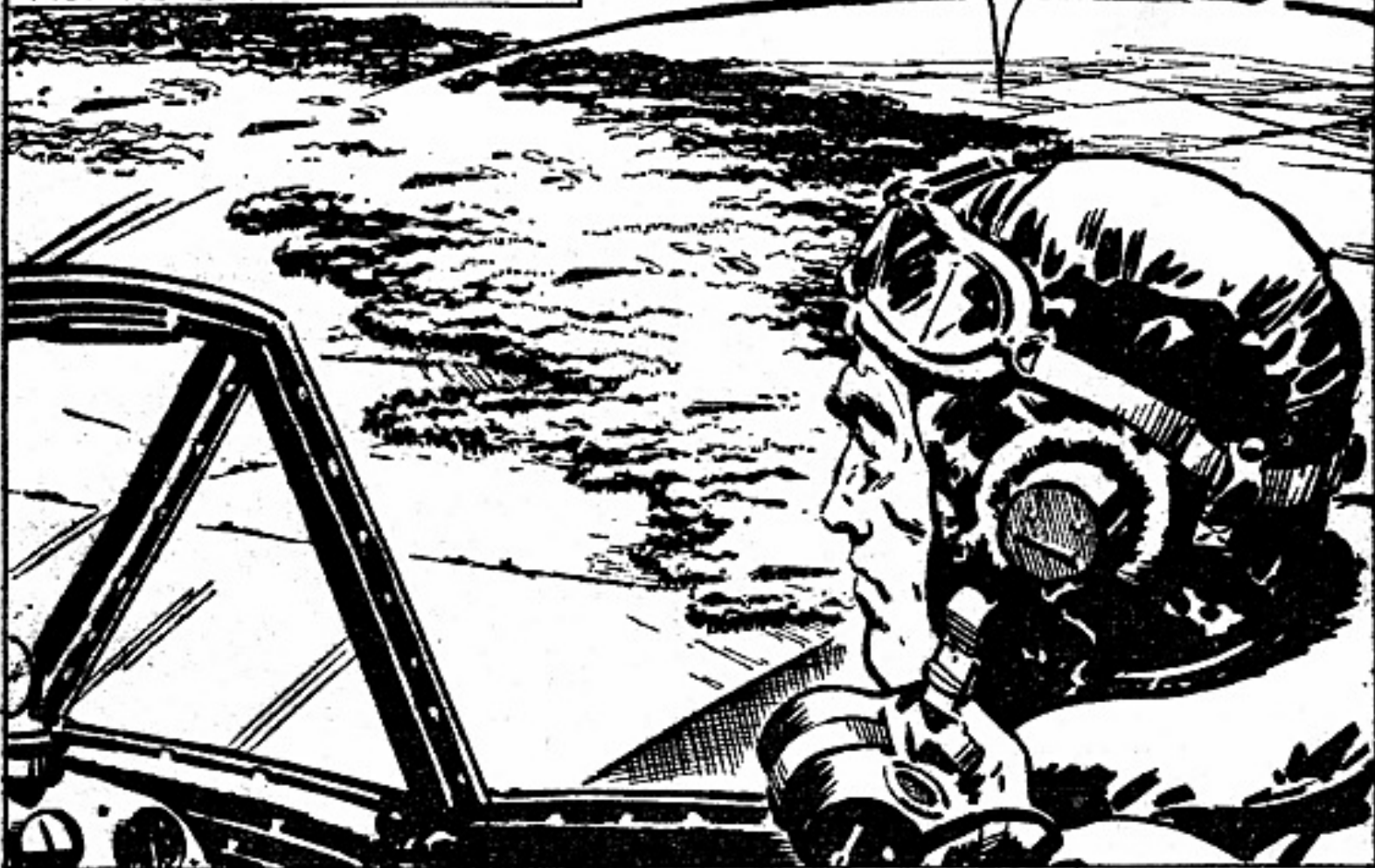
A SECOND LAUNCHING SITE CLOSE BY LOOMED BENEATH THE TEMPEST'S WINGS...

THIS ONE'S NEW, TOO... AND BOTH POINTING NORTH-WEST... WHAT'S JERRY'S GAME?



WITH SHARPENING SUSPICIONS, TIM CLIMBED FOR AN OVER-ALL VIEW OF THE WOOD. THE PICTURE BECAME CLEARER...

SIX NEW LAUNCHING SITES... AND ALL POINTING IN ONE DIRECTION! BUT WHAT'S THE TARGET?



NEXT SECOND, A VIOLENT EXPLOSION WRENCHED HIM ROUND IN SURPRISE...

SOMEONE'S ON MY TAIL!

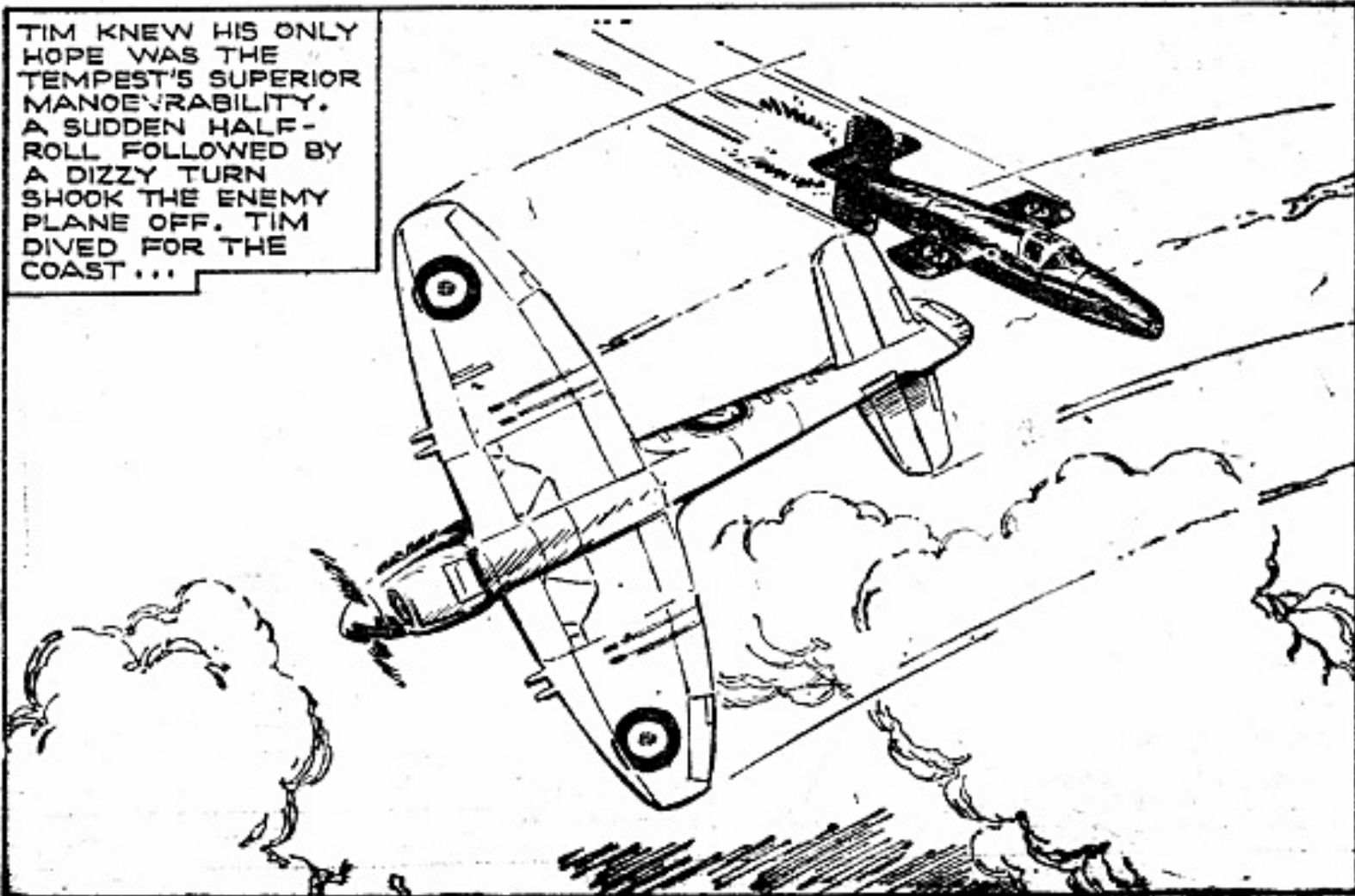


TIM MURRAY WAS TO MAKE ONE MORE DISCOVERY THAT MORNING, A DEADLY ONE! HIS ATTACKER WAS A NEW GERMAN EXPERIMENTAL ROCKET-PROPELLED CRAFT...

HECK, WHAT HAVE I STIRRED UP NOW?



TIM KNEW HIS ONLY HOPE WAS THE TEMPEST'S SUPERIOR MANOEVRABILITY. A SUDDEN HALF-ROLL FOLLOWED BY A DIZZY TURN SHOOK THE ENEMY PLANE OFF. TIM DIVED FOR THE COAST...



ONCE HOME, TIM AND THE STATION COMMANDER WENT TO SEE AIR VICE-MARSHAL CORBY, WHO HEARD TIM OUT IN GRIM SILENCE.

YES, WE KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT JERRY'S NEW PLANE. BUT I'M MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THESE SIX NEW LAUNCHING SITES YOU FOUND ... ALL POINTING THE SAME WAY...

TO THE NORTH-WEST, SIR. ROUGHLY TOWARDS SOUTHAMPTON.

OR THE ISLE OF WIGHT, MURRAY?

TIM MURRAY HEARD NO MORE UNTIL A FEW DAYS LATER WHEN HE WAS SUMMONED TO COMMAND HEADQUARTERS. TO ADD TO THE MYSTERY, SQUADRON-LEADER MIKE CASEY WAS ALSO CALLED.

I'VE A FEELING THERE'S A FLAP ON, MIKE.

YEAH, SOMETHING REAL SPECIAL.



AS THEY REACHED THE ENTRANCE, THE SQUEAL OF BRAKES SOUNDED FROM THE DRIVE ...

HEY, LOOK...
PARATROOPERS!

MAYBE THEY'RE
IN ON THIS
FLAP, TOO.



TIM AND MIKE WERE USHERED INTO A VAST LECTURE-ROOM. THE PARATROOPS FOLLOWED THEM IN. AIR VICE-MARSHAL CORBY SOON APPEARED AND SPOKE AT SOME LENGTH ON TIM'S DISCOVERY OF THE NEW GERMAN LAUNCHING SITES...

WITH THESE NEW SITES, WE SUSPECT
THE GERMANS ARE MOUNTING A
FLYING BOMB OFFENSIVE TO DESTROY
A VITAL TARGET SITUATED ON
THE ISLE OF WIGHT...





THAT TARGET IS A PROJECT CALLED *PLUTO* WHICH STANDS FOR 'PIPE-LINE-UNDER-THE-OCEAN'. IT WILL CARRY PETROL FROM SANDOWN TO OUR INVASION FORCES IN CHERBOURG.

THE A.O.C. CALLED FOR THE ROOM TO BE DARKENED.

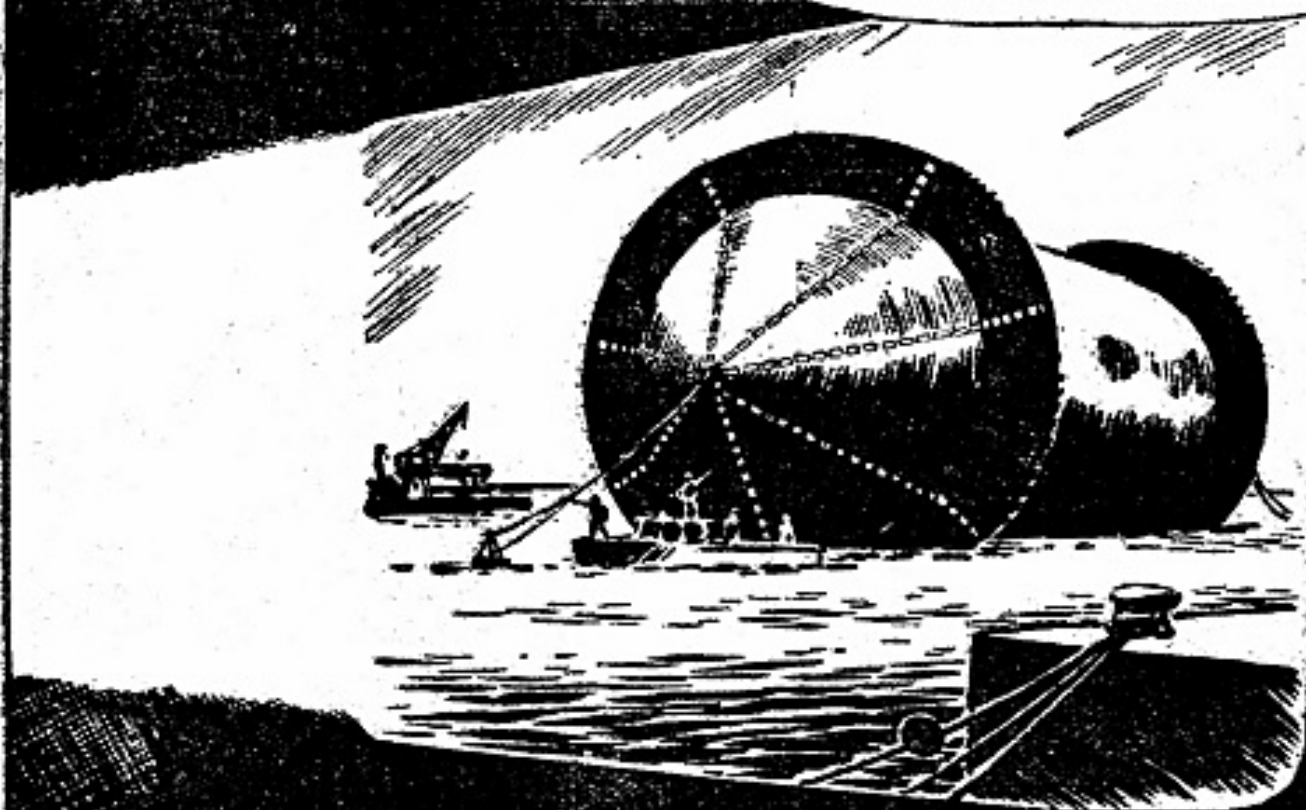
A PICTURE WAS PROJECTED ON THE SCREEN. IT SHOWED SOMETHING OF THE IMMENSE UNDERTAKING THAT THEY NOW KNEW AS *PLUTO*...

LENGTHS OF FLEXIBLE STEEL PIPING TO CARRY THE PETROL, EACH THREE QUARTERS OF A MILE LONG. HUNDREDS OF SUCH LENGTHS ARE NEEDED TO MAKE FOUR PIPES, EACH SIXTY-SEVEN MILES LONG!



ANOTHER PICTURE
APPEARED, EVEN
STRANGER THAN
THE LAST ...

THIS IS A HUGE METAL FLOATING
REEL ON WHICH THE MILES OF
CONTINUOUS PIPING WILL BE WOUND.
IT WILL THEN BE TOWED ACROSS
TO CHERBOURG, PAYING OUT
THE PIPE AS IT GOES.



I WANT TO IMPRESS
ON YOU THE IMMENSE VALUE
OF PLUTO ... AND ALSO THE
DANGER OF ENEMY ATTACK.
YOU ARE TO PREVENT
THAT ATTACK!



CAPTAIN ROKER OF THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT THEN STEPPED FORWARD.

BRIEFLY, WE DROP BY NIGHT, ATTACK AND DESTROY ALL SIX FLYING BOMB SITES, THEN DASH TO THE COAST, WHERE THE NAVY WILL PICK US UP.

AMIDST A BUZZ OF EXCITEMENT, THE AIR VICE-MARSHAL HAD THE LAST WORD...

THE TARGET AREA WILL BE IDENTIFIED BY SQUADRON-LEADER MURRAY WHO WILL FLY IN A MOSQUITO AHEAD OF YOU AND FLASH THE CODE SIGNAL. THAT IS ALL. GOOD LUCK!



TIM AND MIKE CASEY DISCUSSED SEVERAL POINTS OF THE SCHEME WITH THE TOUGH-LOOKING CAPTAIN ROKER...



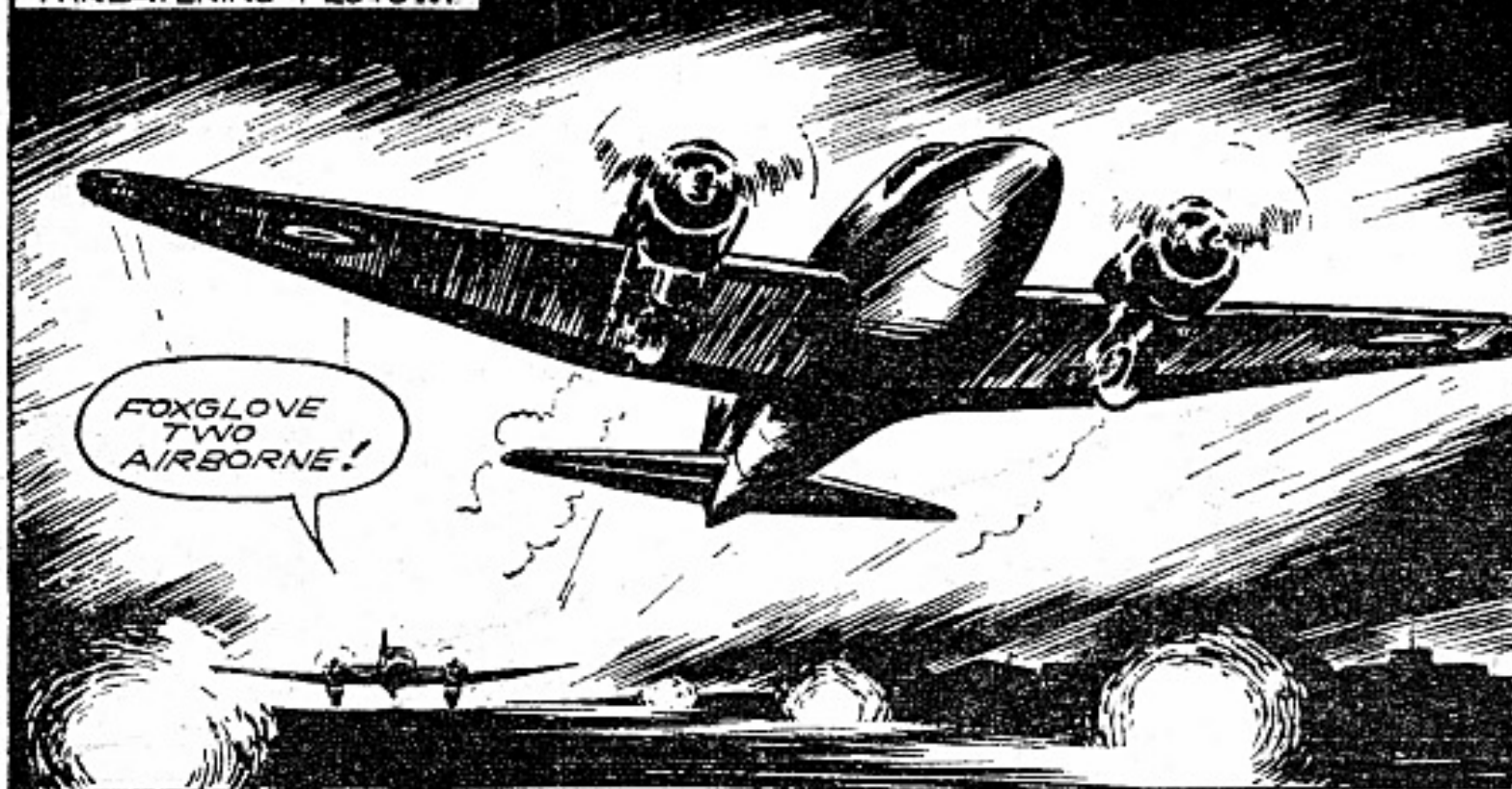
MY SQUADRON OF TEMPESTS WILL HELP YOU THERE...

DO WE GET COVER WHEN WE MAKE OUR GETAWAY?



Chapter 3. Sky Drop

NEXT DAY, FIVE DAKOTA AIRCRAFT TRANSPORT AND ONE HUNDRED BATTLE-EQUIPPED MEN OF THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT ARRIVED AT FERNDOWN. THAT NIGHT, THE TAKE-OFF BEGAN — THE TARGET, THE V.I. LAUNCHING SITES THREATENING PLUTO...



IN THE LEADING DAKOTA, CAPTAIN ROKER BRIEFED HIS MEN...

IT'S A FULL MOON TONIGHT, BAD FOR OUR TYPE OF JOB, SO ONCE DOWN WE'VE GOT TO KEEP ON THE MOVE!

RIGHT, SIR!



CASEY'S MOSQUITO WAS IN FRONT. SEATED BESIDE THE CANADIAN, TIM MURRAY PREPARED TO IDENTIFY THE TARGET AREA.

FEELS LIKE A PRETTY STRONG CROSS WIND, MIKE.

YEAH, I'LL HAVE TO ALLOW FOR DRIFT.



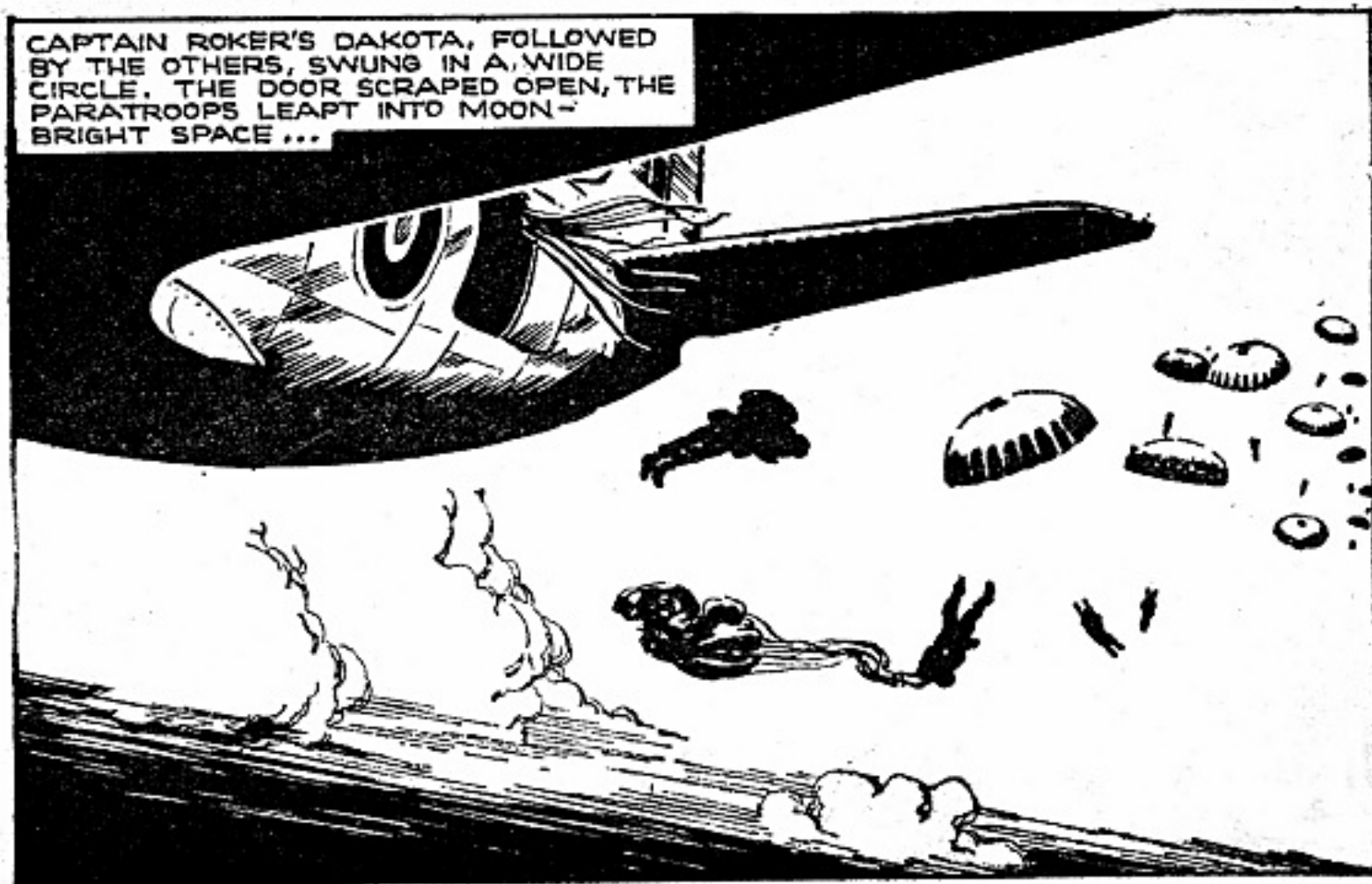
PRESENTLY, WITH A GRUNT OF RELIEF, TIM RECOGNISED THE TROUVILLE LANDFALL. MINUTES LATER...

THAT'S IT...
THAT BIG WOOD
DOWN THERE!

OKAY!
I'LL FLASH
THE BOYS
BEHIND.

MIKE WINKED THE AIRCRAFT'S
RECOGNITION LIGHTS. THIS
WAS THE SIGNAL...

CAPTAIN ROKER'S DAKOTA, FOLLOWED
BY THE OTHERS, SWUNG IN A WIDE
CIRCLE. THE DOOR SCRAPED OPEN, THE
PARATROOPS LEAPT INTO MOON-
BRIGHT SPACE...



THE STRONG CROSS WIND MADE THINGS DIFFICULT. THE PARACHUTES WERE SCATTERED OVER A LARGE AREA ...

WE'RE
DROPPING
TOO WIDE!

DARNED
TREES!

LANDING SAFELY, CAPTAIN ROKER WAITED FOR AS LONG AS HE DARED FOR HIS SCATTERED FORCE. AT LAST, WITH LITTLE MORE THAN HALF THEIR ORIGINAL NUMBER, HE PUSHED ON ...

THROUGH THESE
WOODS... SHOULD
SOON REACH THE
FIRST LAUNCHING
SITE ...

MEANWHILE, CASEY AND TIM MURRAY
TURNED FOR HOME. BUT HALFWAY
ACROSS THE CHANNEL, THE
CANADIAN HAD AN IDEA...

WHAT D'YOU SAY WE
PAY A VISIT TO FLYING
BOMB ALLEY, TIM?

SUITS ME, MIKE...
SHOULD BE GOOD
HUNTING TONIGHT!

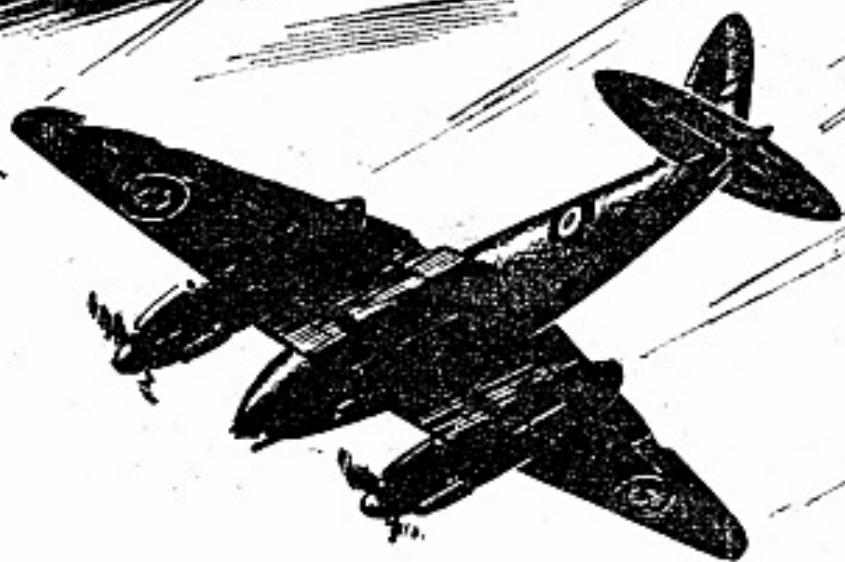
SPEEDING UP-CHANNEL TO WHERE THE
FLYING BOMBS FLEW THICKEST, IT
WAS NOT LONG BEFORE A WINKING
RED EXHAUST CAUGHT THEIR EYES...

THERE GOES
ONE, MIKE!

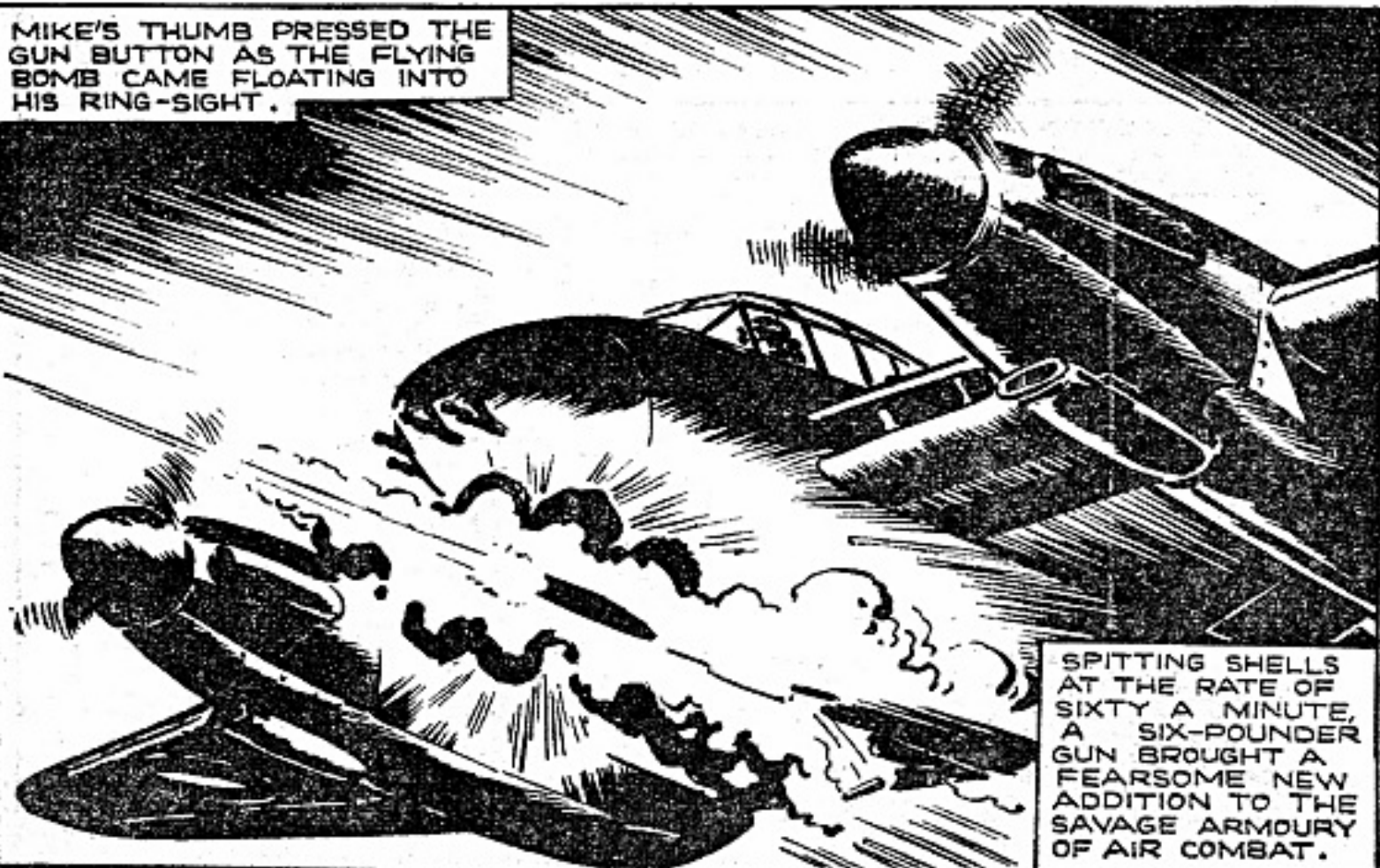
GREAT!
I'VE GOT
SOMETHING
TO SHOW
YOU, TIM!

CASEY STEPPED UP THE SPEED, EXCITED AT THE PROSPECT OF USING A NEW AND POWERFUL WEAPON THE MOSQUITO CARRIED IN ITS NOSE...

WATCH THIS, TIM!

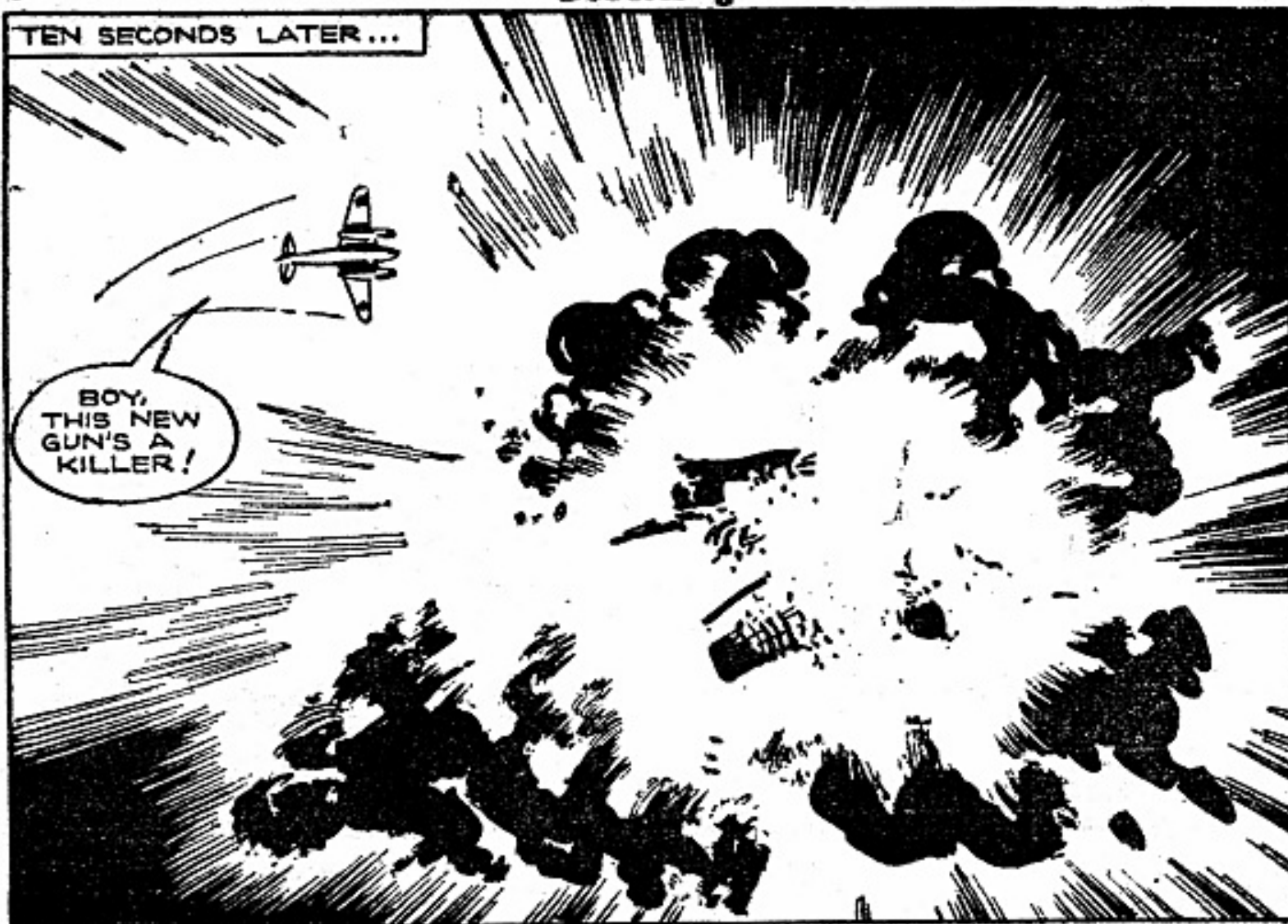


MIKE'S THUMB PRESSED THE GUN BUTTON AS THE FLYING BOMB CAME FLOATING INTO HIS RING-SIGHT.



SPITTING SHELLS AT THE RATE OF SIXTY A MINUTE, A SIX-POUNDER GUN BROUGHT A FEARSOME NEW ADDITION TO THE SAVAGE ARMOURY OF AIR COMBAT.

TEN SECONDS LATER...



IT WAS A DELIGHTED MIKE CASEY WHO LANDED HIS MOSQUITO AN HOUR LATER. HE GRINNED DELIGHTEDLY AT HIS NEW GUN...

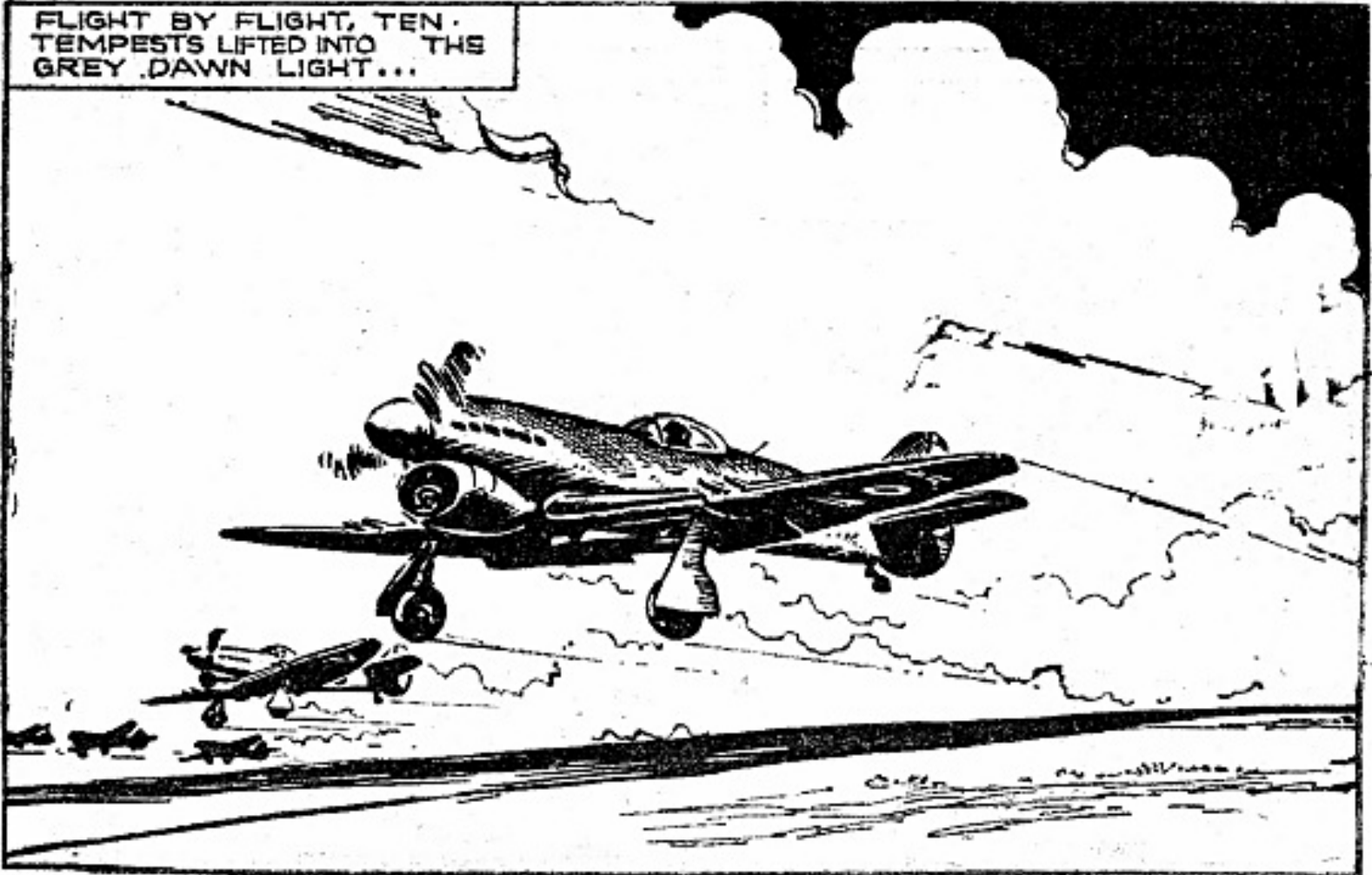


TIM'S SQUADRON ROSE EARLY NEXT MORNING, FOR THEY WERE TO COVER THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE PARATROOPERS. BY FIRST LIGHT, TIM WAS BRIEFING THE PILOTS...

WE'LL GO IN AT SEA LEVEL. KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED FOR THE BOATS EVACUATING THE PARATROOPERS.

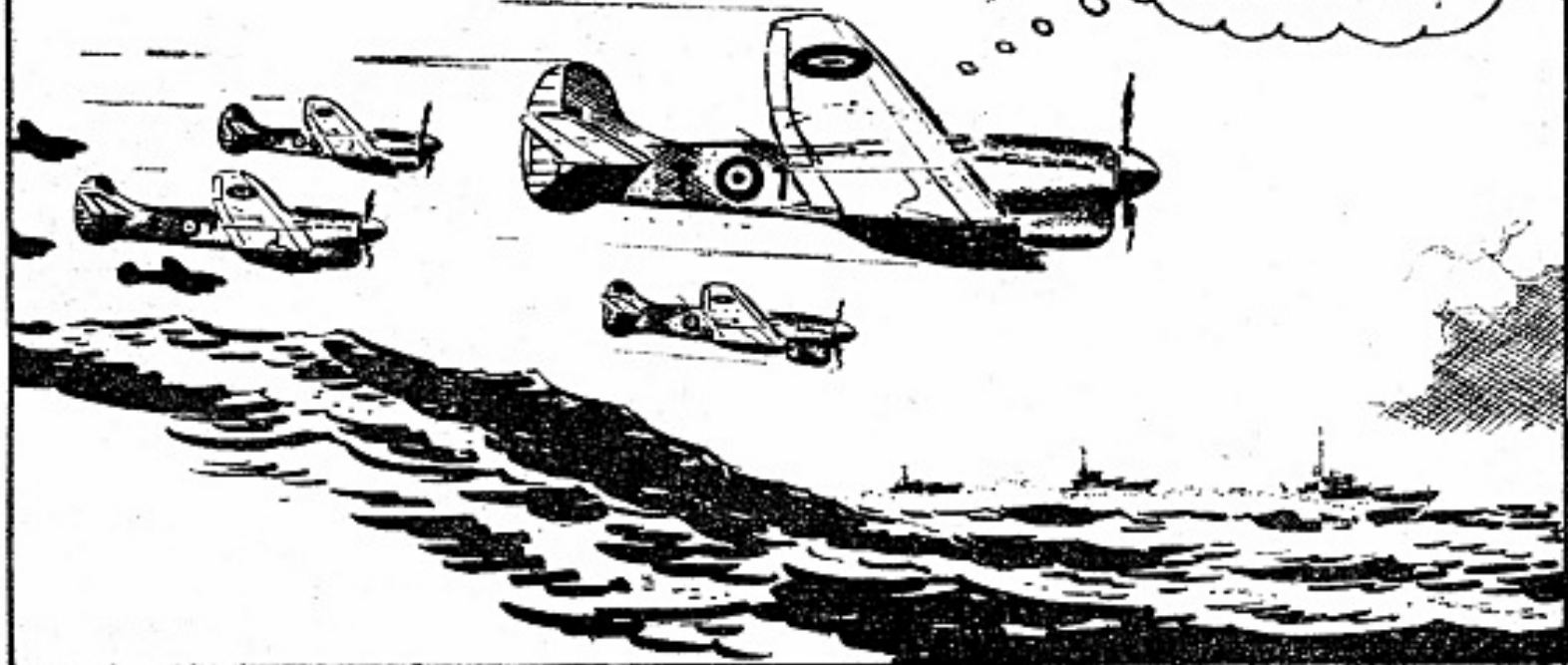


FLIGHT BY FLIGHT, TEN TEMPESTS LIFTED INTO THE GREY DAWN LIGHT...



ALMOST CLIPPING THE GREY WAVE-TOPS, TIM LED HIS MEN ACROSS THE CHANNEL. JUST OFF THE FRENCH COAST, THEY SPOTTED THREE MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS...

THEY'RE THE BOATS THAT ARE TO PICK UP THE PARATROOPERS. WHAT'S HOLDING THEM BACK?



FOR SOME MINUTES, TIM CIRCLED HIS SQUADRON OVER THE PICK-UP ZONE... BUT NO SIGNAL CAME FROM CAPTAIN ROKER'S FORCE. TIM GREW UNEASY...

KEEP CIRCLING, CHAPS. I'M GOING INLAND FOR A RECCE.



BUT TIM HAD BARELY REACHED THE NOW-FAMILIAR WOOD WHEN AN UNEARTHLY SCREECH SHATTERED THE DAWN-RED SKY ABOVE HIM.

HECK, IT'S THAT JERRY ROCKET-PLANE AGAIN!

THE KITE'S HAD IT! GOT TO GET OUT!

BUT TIM WAS IN FOR AN UNPLEASANT LANDING. THE FARMLAND HAD BEEN DELIBERATELY FLOODED BY THE GERMANS.

GOOD GRIEF, I'LL HAVE TO SWIM FOR IT!



TIM STRUCK OUT STRONGLY. AT LAST, SOAKED THROUGH, HE HAULED HIMSELF ON TO FIRM GROUND.

THAT WAS A NEAR THING!




BUT, A MINUTE LATER, HE WAS SPOTTED BY A GERMAN PATROL. MURRAY RACED TOWARDS A WOOD, HOPING TO SHAKE OFF HIS PURSUERS...

THERE HE GOES!




PLUNGING INTO THE THICK UNDERGROWTH, TIM LAY CONCEALED UNTIL THE GERMANS HAD PASSED BY. THEN HE HEARD AN UNMISTAKABLE SOUND...

RIFLE FIRE!
I BET THAT'S
CAPTAIN ROKER'S
BOYS!




TIM CLIMBED A TREE. FROM THE TOP BRANCHES HE COULD SEE THE NEAREST OF THE LAUNCHING SITES...

A black and white comic panel showing a soldier, Tim, climbing a large tree. He is seen from the side, wearing a uniform and a helmet. The background shows a landscape with a river or road and some buildings in the distance.

THE RIFLE-FIRE IS COMING FROM THAT BLOCK-HOUSE. LOOKS AS IF ROKER'S TRAPPED

TIM WAS DETERMINED TO JOIN THE BESIEGED PARATROOPERS. MAKING A DESPERATE DASH, HE RAN THE GAUNTLET OF THE ENCIRCLING GERMAN INFANTRY...

A black and white comic panel showing Tim running through a field towards a blockhouse. In the foreground, there are two German soldiers in a trench. One is aiming a rifle at Tim. The background shows a landscape with trees and a blockhouse.

ACHTUNG, ENGLANDER!

SHOOT HIM DOWN!

AS HE PELTED FOR COVER UNDER A HAIL OF BULLETS, TIM GLIMPSED THE WRECKED LAUNCHING RAMP AND GUESSED ROKER'S FORCE HAD BEEN AT WORK.

LUMME! IT'S AN AIR FORCE BLOKE, SIR!

HEY, OPEN UP!



THE HEAVY STEEL DOOR SWUNG OPEN IN ANSWER TO TIM'S POUNDING. BURSTING IN, HE FOUND CAPTAIN ROKER'S COOL GRIN AWAITING HIM...

MURRAY! WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?

HELLO, CAPTAIN! I HAD A PRANG!



Chapter 4. *Moment of Decision!*

THERE WAS A LULL IN THE BATTLE AS THE GERMANS MUSTERED THEIR FORCES FOR AN ALL-OUT ASSAULT. SWIFTLY, CAPTAIN ROKER EXPLAINED WHAT HAD HAPPENED...



ROKER THRUST A SHEET OF PAPER INTO THE AIRMAN'S HANDS. IT WAS COVERED IN GERMAN TELEPRINT.

JUDGING FROM THIS JERRY ORDER, IT SEEMS THESE LAUNCHING SITES WILL BE IN ACTION ANY MOMENT NOW...

AND THERE ARE STILL FOUR OF THEM IN WORKING ORDER...



AS WE SUSPECTED, THE TARGET IS PLUTO.

SOMEHOW, WE'VE GOT TO WARN COMMAND.



A LOUD-HAILER FROM THE GERMAN LINES INTERRUPTED THEIR DISCUSSION...

LISTEN, ENGLANDERS!
SURRENDER IMMEDIATELY
OR WE SHALL BLOW
YOU TO PIECES WITH
OUR HEAVY GUNS!



THREE TIMES THE GUTTURAL ANNOUNCEMENT BLARED ACROSS THE CLEARING. BUT ROKER WAS NOT IMPRESSED...

THEY WON'T SHELL US. THERE ARE NEARLY A HUNDRED OF THEIR PRECIOUS FLYING BOMBS STACKED NEXT DOOR.

YOU'RE RIGHT, CAPTAIN. THEY WON'T RISK DESTROYING THEM.

BUT THE GERMAN'S NEXT WORDS STARTLED TIM AND THE CAPTAIN...

DROP YOUR ARMS!
SURRENDER! TOMORROW AT DAWN, OUR FLYING BOMBS WILL BEGIN THE DESTRUCTION OF YOUR PROJECT PLUTO!

AT DAWN!

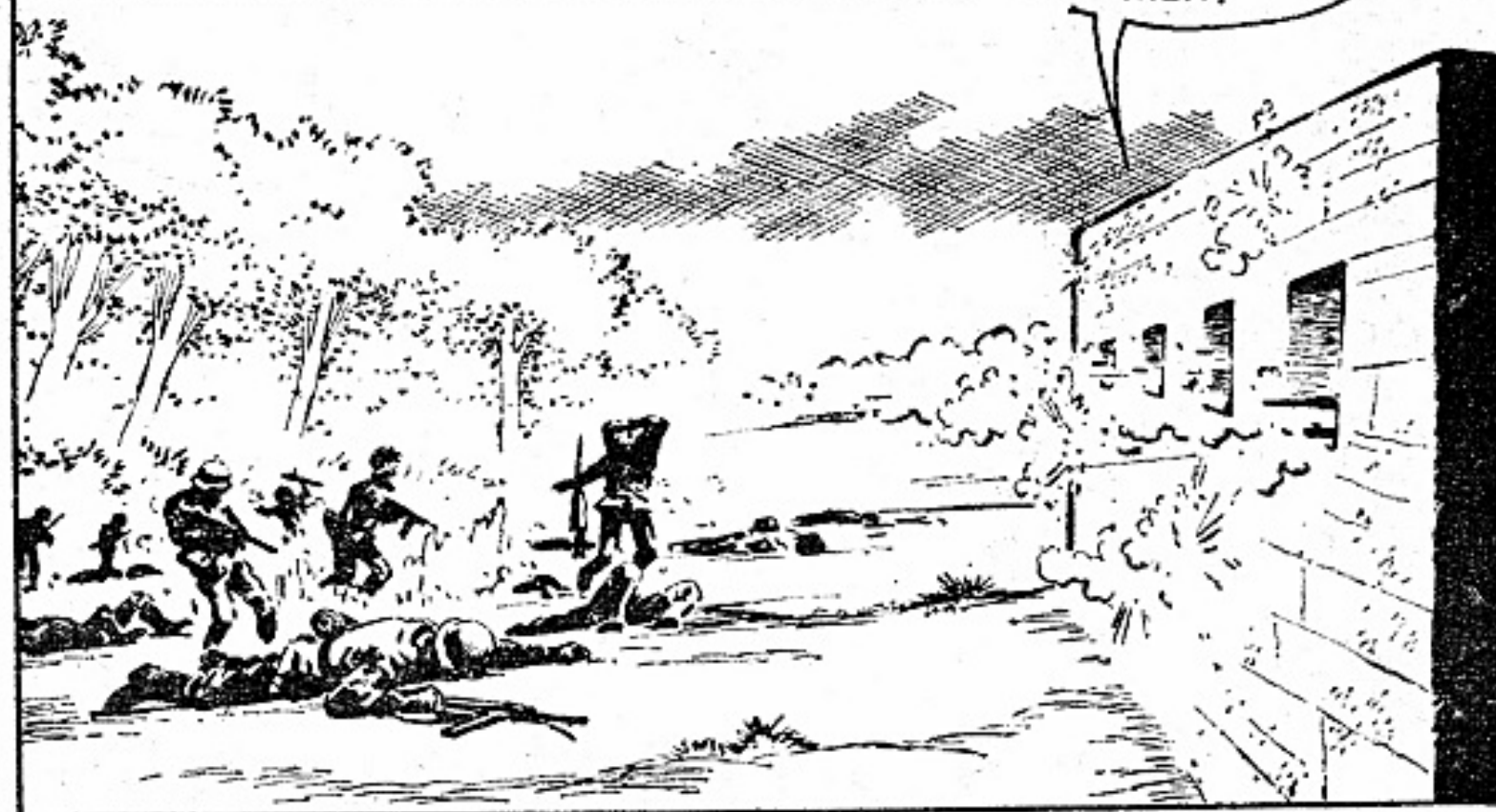
THERE WAS TO BE NO SURRENDER. HEARING SHOUTS OF DEFIANCE FROM THE BESIEGED PARATROOPERS, THE GERMAN COMMANDER LOST PATIENCE...

ATTACK!
...ATTACK!



ONE ATTACK AFTER ANOTHER WAS LAUNCHED AGAINST THE BLOCK-HOUSES. CLEARLY, THE INTENTION WAS TO WEAR DOWN THE TIRING DEFENDERS BY SHEER PERSISTENCE.

MAKE EVERY
BULLET COUNT,
MEN!



BUT CAPTAIN ROKER'S MEN WERE NO ORDINARY MORTALS...THEY WERE BRITAIN'S TOUGHEST AND ROUGHEST WARRIORS. BY EVENING, THEIR SPIRITS WERE UNDAUNTED...

COR, I BET OLD JERRY LOVES US!



DARKNESS CAME, AND THEIR PROBLEM TO GET A MESSAGE BACK TO BASE REMAINED UNSOLVED. A ROAR OF AIRCRAFT OVERHEAD BROUGHT TIM MURRAY RUSHING OUTSIDE...

IT'S A MOSQUITO!
I BET IT'S MIKE CASEY!



GRABBING ROKER'S TORCH, TIM FLASHED IT TOWARDS THE DARK, CIRCLING SHAPE ABOVE. IN SIMPLE DOTS AND DASHES, HE SPELT OUT THE BRIEF DRAMATIC MESSAGE...

BOMB... ALL...
SITES ... NOW...
URGENT!



SECONDS LATER, THE WORD 'ROGER' WINKED BACK REASSURINGLY.

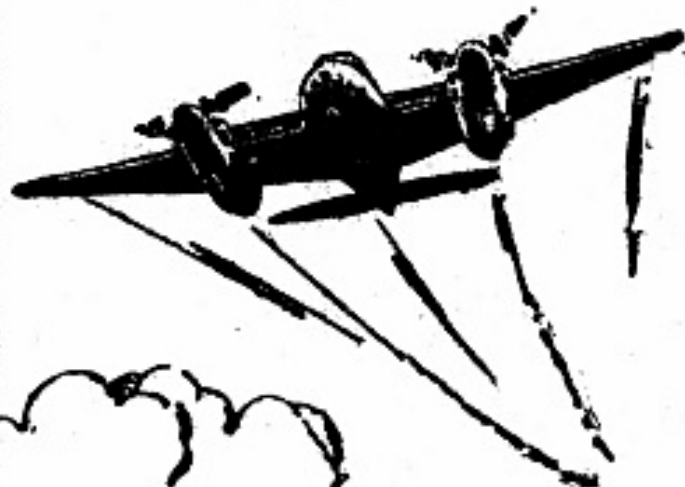
TIM HAD BEEN RIGHT. CASEY WAS AT THE CONTROLS OF THE MOSQUITO OVERHEAD. AS THE CANADIAN SET COURSE FOR HOME, HIS IMAGINATION WAS WORKING OVERTIME.



THAT WAS TIM MURRAY FLASHING ME. THOSE PARATROOPS MUST'VE GOT BOGGED DOWN SOMEHOW...

THEN A HORRIFYING THOUGHT ALMOST MADE MIKE CHECK THE MOSQUITO'S HURTLING SPEED...

BUT IF TIM AND THE OTHERS ARE TRAPPED IN THAT WOOD, THEY'LL BE BLOWN TO PIECES, TOO!



DESPERATELY, MIKE RACKED HIS BRAINS - HOW TO DESTROY THOSE LAUNCHING SITES AND YET LEAVE HIS FRIENDS UNTOUCHED. THEN, LIKE A BRIGHT FLASH, INSPIRATION CAME...

WHY, OF COURSE! OUR SIX-POUNDER GUNS!



IN THE STIFLING HEAT OF THE BESIEGED BLOCK-HOUSE MURRAY AND ROKER HAD ALREADY REALISED THE POSITION THEY WOULD BE IN WHEN THE R.A.F RAID STARTED...

WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE A RUN FOR IT WHEN IT STARTS... AND HOPE WE DON'T GET BLOWN TO BITS!



LANDING AT FERNDOWN, MIKE CASEY LEAPT TO THE GROUND AND SPRINTED FOR THE MOSQUITOES' NIGHT-FLYING DISPERSAL HUT...

THERE'S EIGHT OF US WITH THOSE SIX-POUNDER GUNS. WE COULD PICK OFF THOSE DOODLEBUG SITES NICE AND EASY!



MIKE BURST THROUGH THE DOOR, PANTING OUT HIS NEWS...

TIM MURRAY'S IN TROUBLE, BLOKES. HE WANTS SOME HELP. IT'S A JOB FOR OUR NEW-SIX-POUNDERS...

RIGHT... LET'S GO!



WHILE THE EIGHT MOSQUITOES WERE BEING ARMED AND FUELLED, MIKE GRABBED A TELEPHONE AND RANG THE MESS. CRISPLY, HE OUTLINED HIS PLANS TO FREDDIE SAWYER...

SORRY TO DISTURB YOUR SLEEP, FREDDIE, BUT I KNEW YOU'D BE RILED IF WE LEFT YOU TEMPEST BOYS OUT OF THIS BEAT-UP!

YOU BET MIKE! I'LL ROUSE THE LADS ... DAWN'S ONLY AN HOUR OFF, THOUGH!

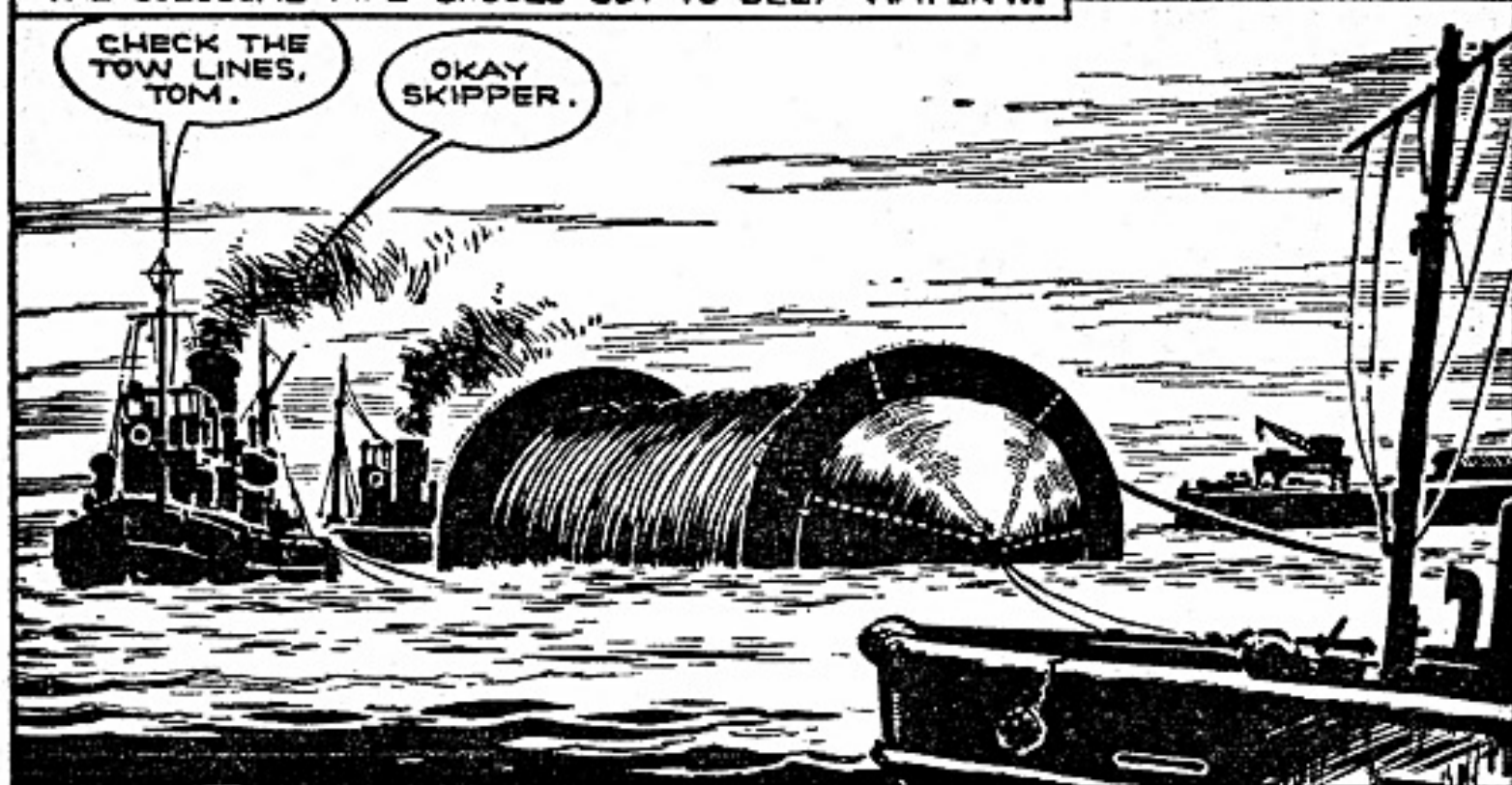
FREDDIE SIGNED OFF WITH ANOTHER WARNING...

I SUPPOSE YOU REALISE THAT IF YOUR SIX-POUNDER GUNS DON'T DO THE TRICK, YOU'LL BE FOR THE HIGH-JUMP!

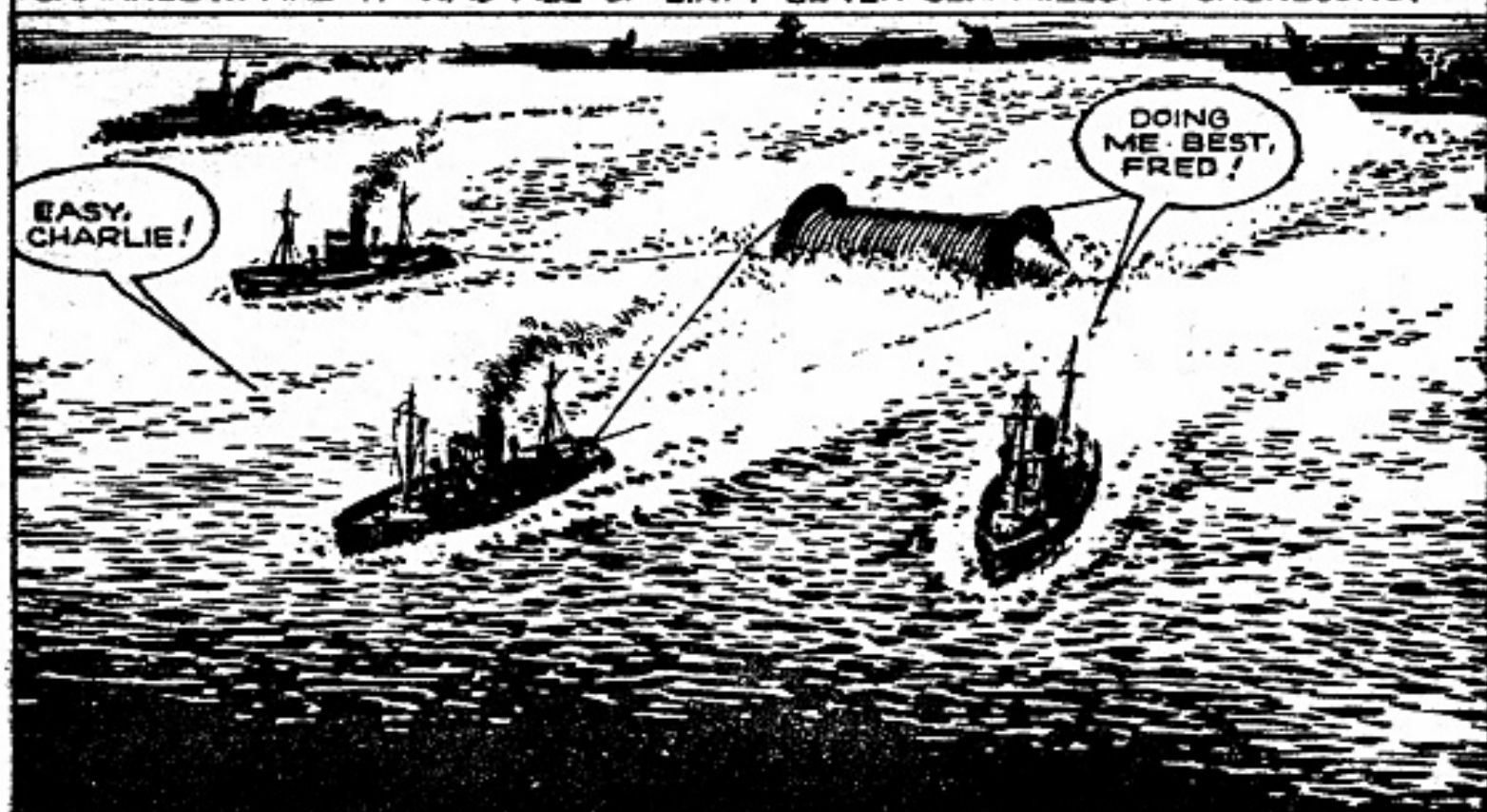
GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT, FREDDIE ... BUT I'M TAKING THE GAMBLE. BE SEEING YOU!

Chapter 5. Dawn Battle

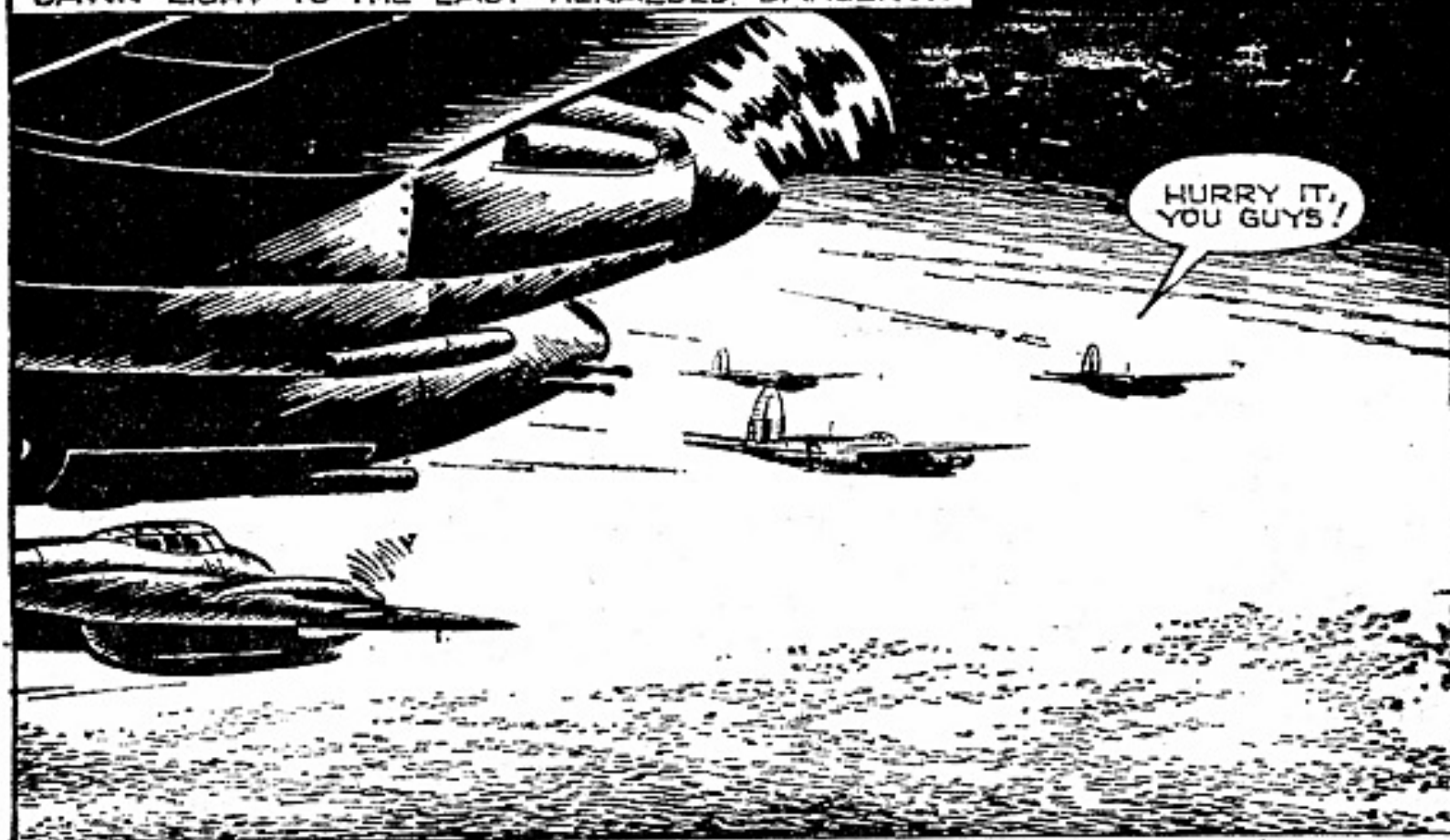
DURING THOSE SAME FATEFUL HOURS OF DARKNESS, THE VAST EQUIPMENT WHICH WENT TO MAKE UP THE PIPE-LINE UNDER THE OCEAN, WAS BUSILY PREPARED. WHEN DAYLIGHT BROKE, TUGS WERE TOWING ONE OF THE COLOSSAL PIPE SPOOLS OUT TO DEEP WATER ...



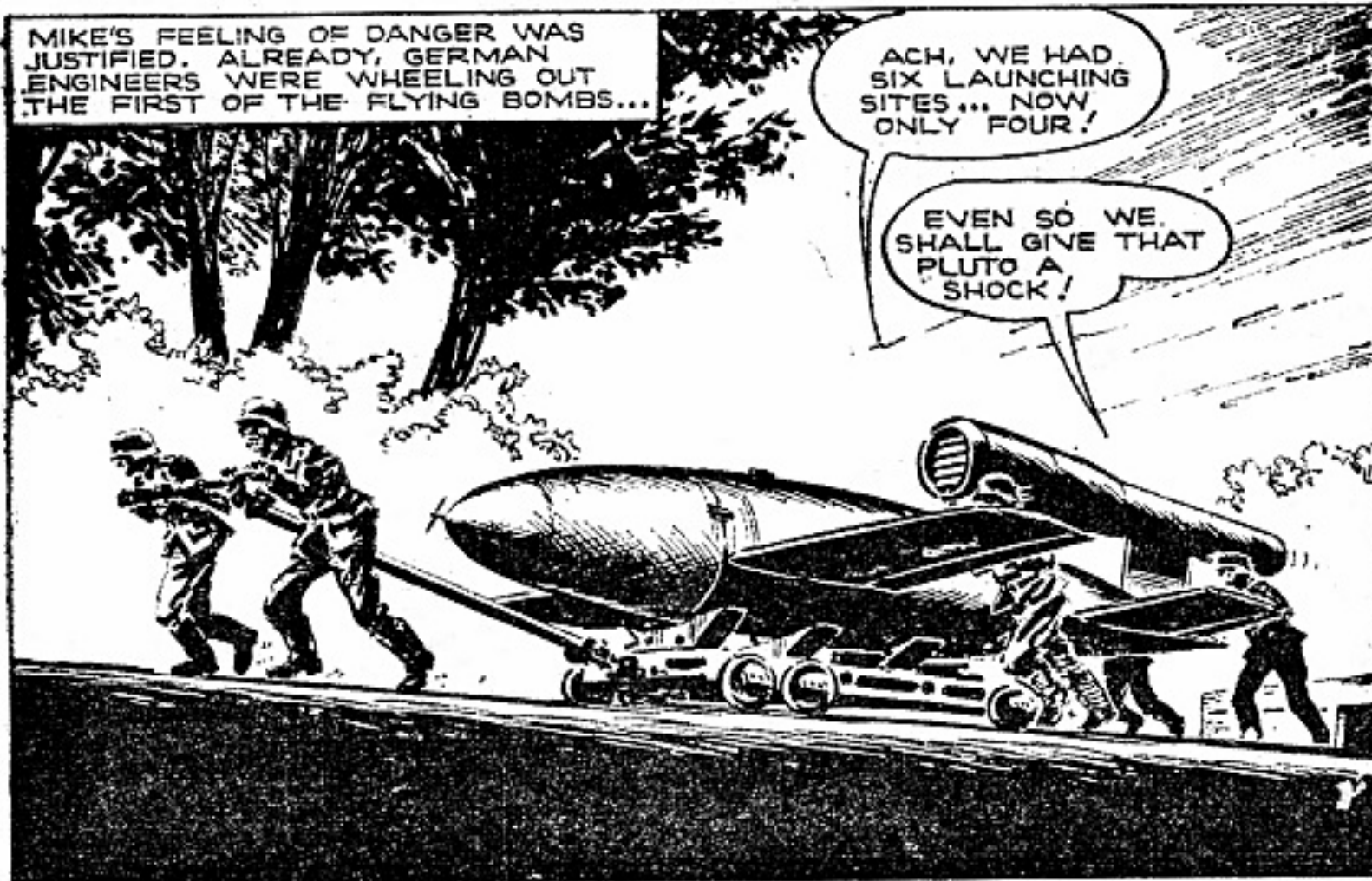
EVERY MAN KNEW THAT IT WAS ONE THING TO BRING PLUTO TO THE POINT OF DEPARTURE, BUT QUITE ANOTHER TO NURSE IT ACROSS A HOSTILE CHANNEL ... AND IT WAS ALL OF SIXTY-SEVEN SEA MILES TO CHERBOURG!



AT THAT MOMENT, MIKE CASEY'S FORCE OF EIGHT MOSQUITOES WAS ROARING OUT OVER THE CHANNEL. SOME SIXTH SENSE TOLD HIM THAT THE DAWN-LIGHT TO THE EAST HERALDED DANGER...



MIKE'S FEELING OF DANGER WAS JUSTIFIED. ALREADY, GERMAN ENGINEERS WERE WHEELING OUT THE FIRST OF THE FLYING BOMBS...

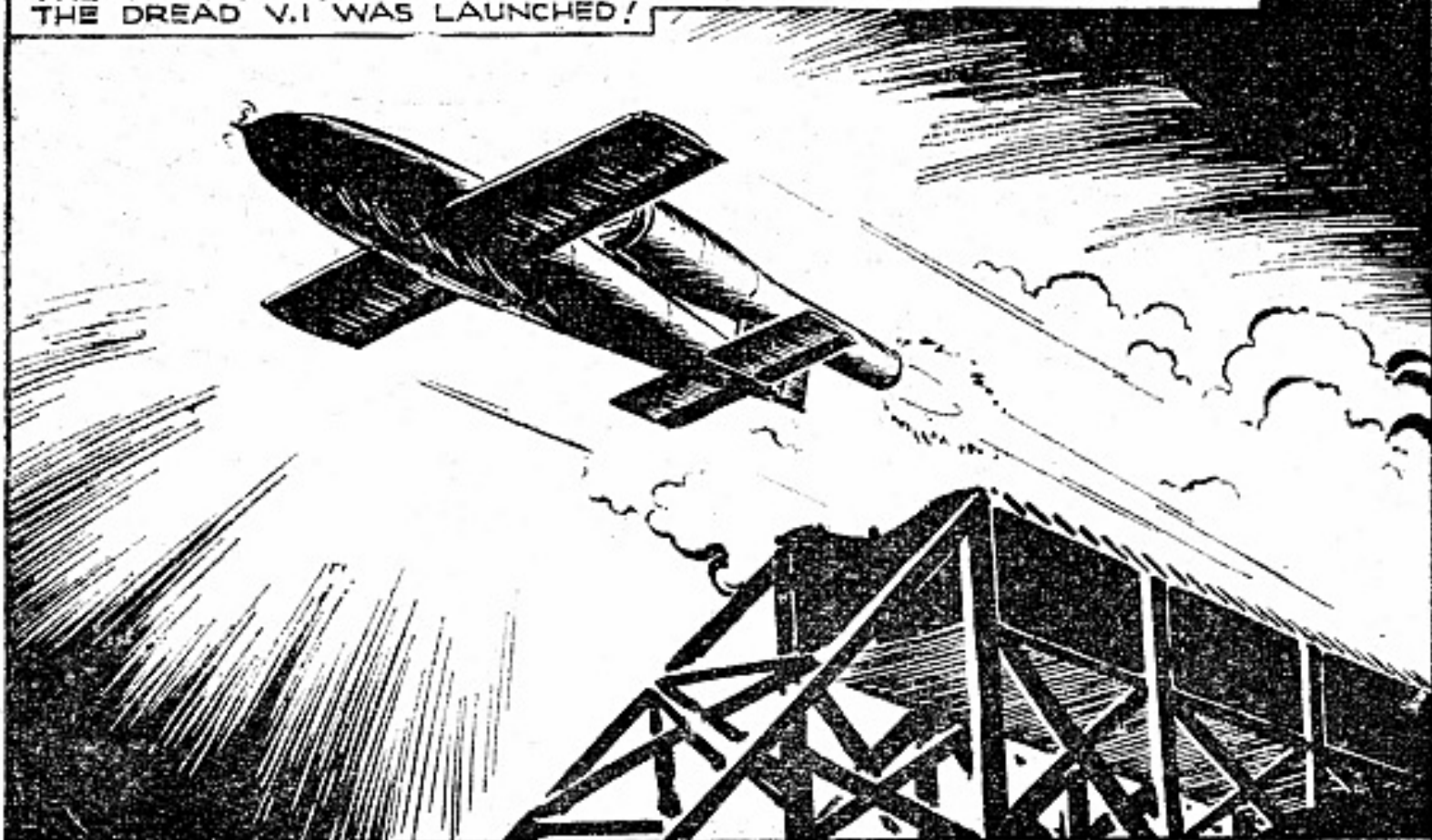


AT THE OTHER THREE LAUNCHING SITES, HALF-HIDDEN IN THE DENSE WOOD, THE SAME ACTIVITY WAS IN PROGRESS...

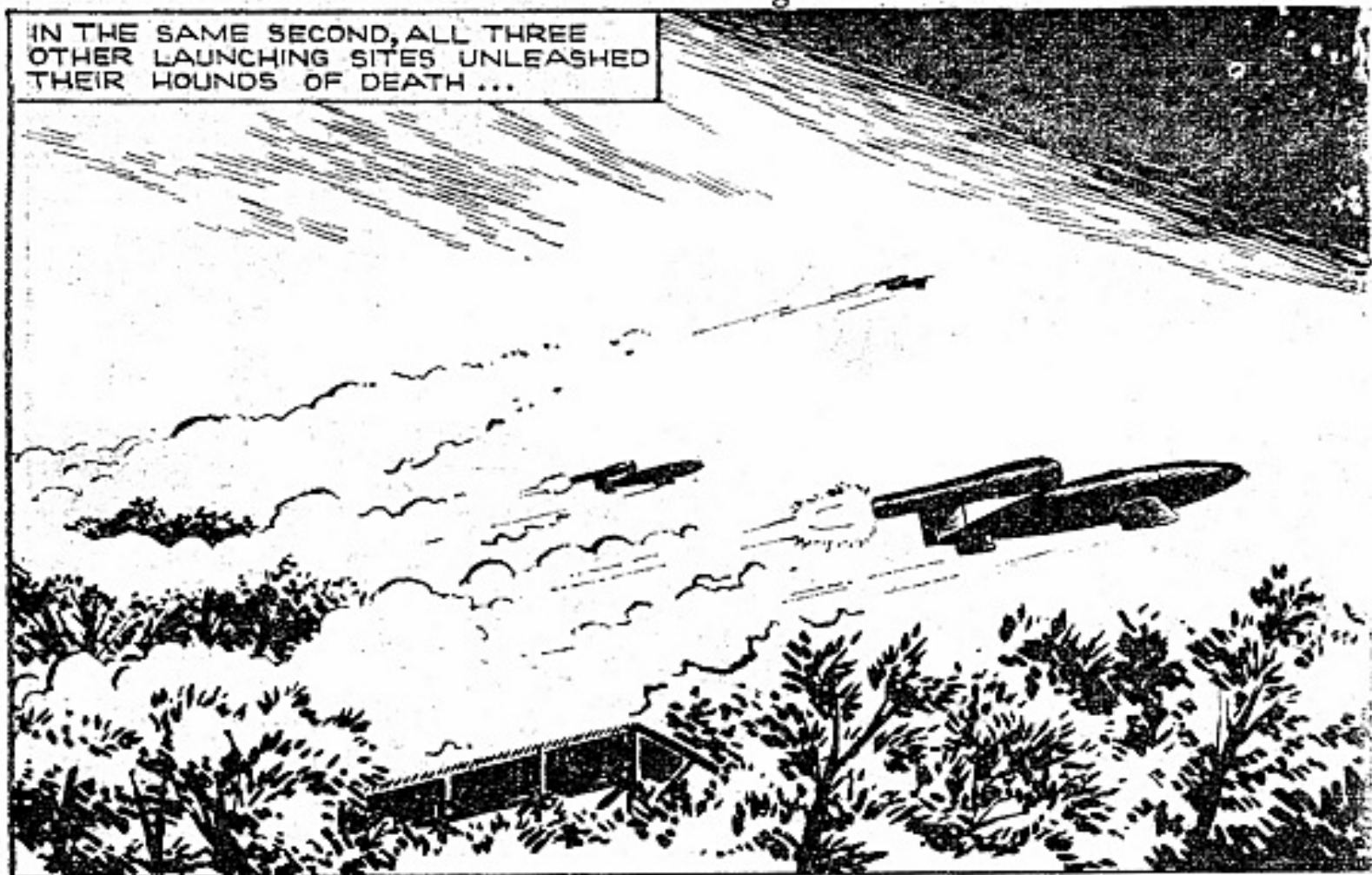
ALL IS READY!



FROM A CENTRAL FIRE POST CAME THE GUTTURAL COUNT DOWN. THERE WAS A SULPHUROUS FLASH AND A TEARING EXPLOSION. THE DREAD V.1 WAS LAUNCHED!



IN THE SAME SECOND, ALL THREE OTHER LAUNCHING SITES UNLEASHED THEIR HOUNDS OF DEATH...



THE SNARLING TAKE-OFF OF THE FOUR ROBOT MISSILES SHATTERED THE ROSE-PINK DAWN AND FILLED THE EARS OF THE BESIEGED MEN IN THE CONCRETE BLOCK-HOUSE...

THE FIRST SALVO!

THE BLITZ ON PLUTO'S BEGUN!

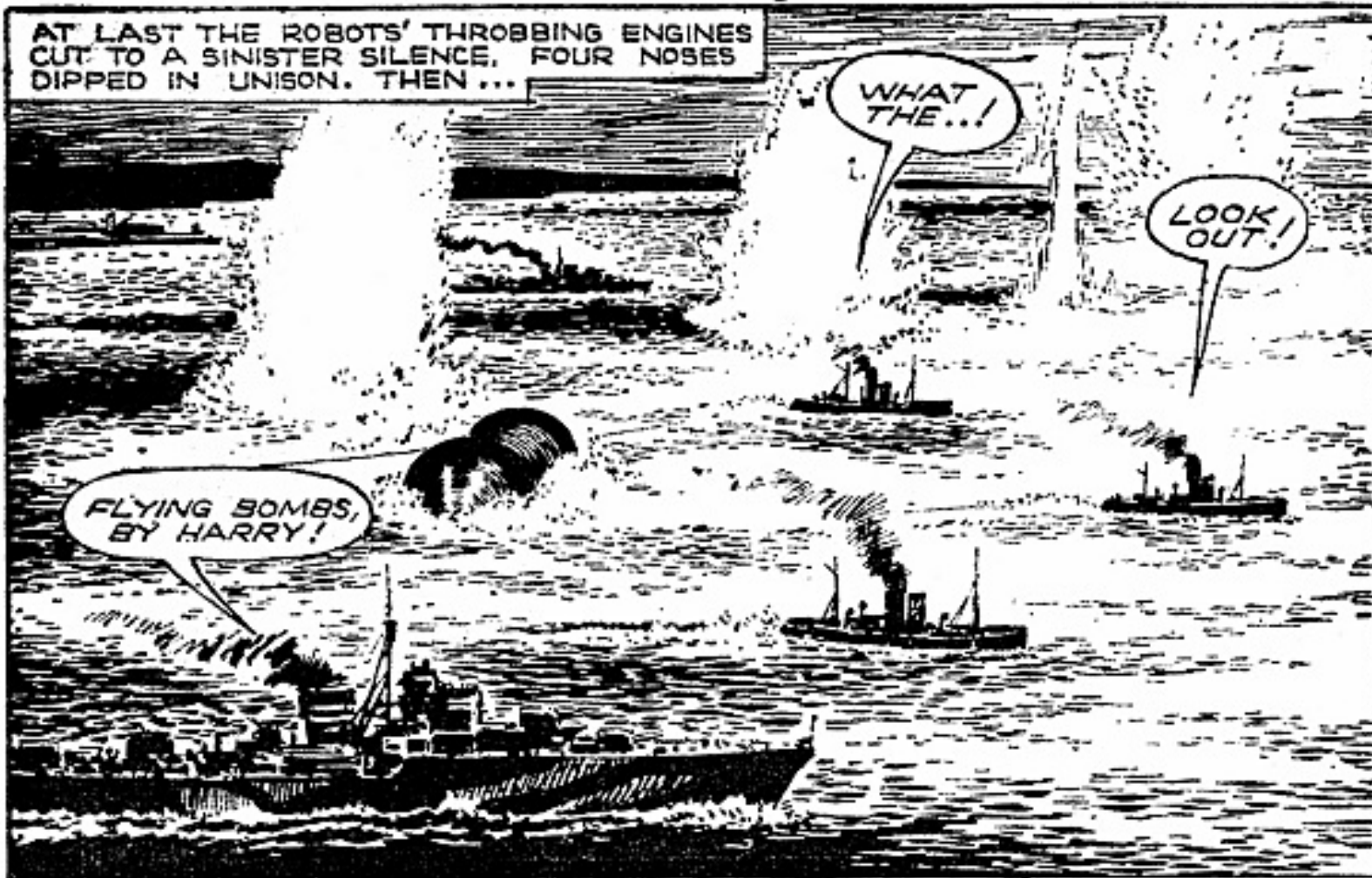


MIKE CASEY WAS THE FIRST OF THE MOSQUITO PILOTS TO SIGHT THE ENEMY'S FIRST SALVO ...

DARN IT! WE'RE
TOO LATE TO STOP
THEM! FASTER,
FELLERS!

HOLDING STRICTLY TO THEIR
COURSE, THE FOUR FLYING BOMBS
HURTLED REMORSELESSLY ON ...

AT LAST THE ROBOTS' THROBBING ENGINES CUT TO A SINISTER SILENCE. FOUR NOSES DIPPED IN UNISON. THEN ...



WHAT THE...!

LOOK OUT!

FLYING BOMBS,
BY HARRY!

EARS STUNNED BY
THE FOUR EXPLOSIONS
AND DRENCHED WITH
FLYING SPRAY, THE
PLUTO TUGMEN
STARED AGAPE ...

ONLY JUST
MISSED US,
BY HOKEY!



OVER THE GREAT WOOD BEHIND TROUVILLE, MIKE CASEY SINGLED OUT THE LAUNCHING SITE HE WAS AFTER. HE GRABBED HIS MICROPHONE...

THERE IT IS, FELLER!
CAPTAIN ROKER'S
CROWD IS IN THE TWO
BLOCK-HOUSES... AND
STILL FIGHTING!
LET'S GO!




IN THE BLOCK-HOUSES BELOW, THE BRITISH DEFENDERS WERE FACING ANOTHER DAWN OF PERSISTENT ATTACK. SUDDENLY, TIM BRIGHTENED AT THE WELCOME ROAR OF TWIN MERLIN MOTORS OVERHEAD...


MOSQUITOES!
MUST BE CASEY'S
BOYS!



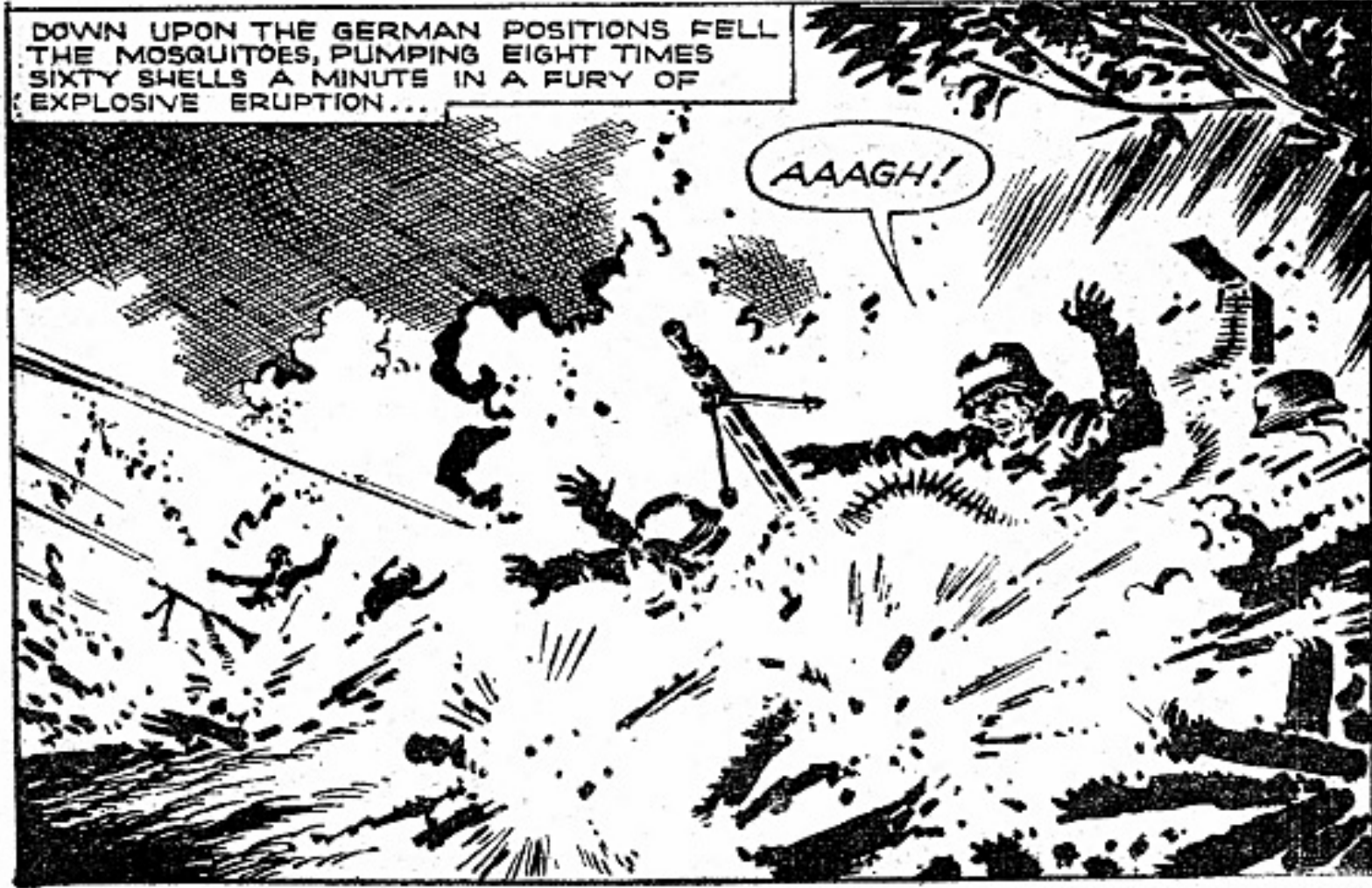
BUT TIM HAD EXPECTED HEAVY BOMBERS.
WHY HAD MOSQUITOES MADE THE TRIP?



NEXT SECOND, TIM'S EARS
CAUGHT THE SAVAGE CHORUS
OF EIGHT SIX-POUNDER
QUICK-FIRING GUNS...CASEY'S
ARTILLERY OF THE AIR!



DOWN UPON THE GERMAN POSITIONS FELL
THE MOSQUITOES, PUMPING EIGHT TIMES
SIXTY SHELLS A MINUTE IN A FURY OF
EXPLOSIVE ERUPTION...



AAAGH!

AS THE 'HAIL OF DESTRUCTION PASSED, THE TRAPPED PARATROOPERS SAW THEIR CHANCE. ROARING REVENGE, THEY BROKE FROM THE BLOCK-HOUSES AND RUSHED THEIR WILTING PERSECUTORS...

CUT THROUGH AND MAKE FOR THE BEACH!



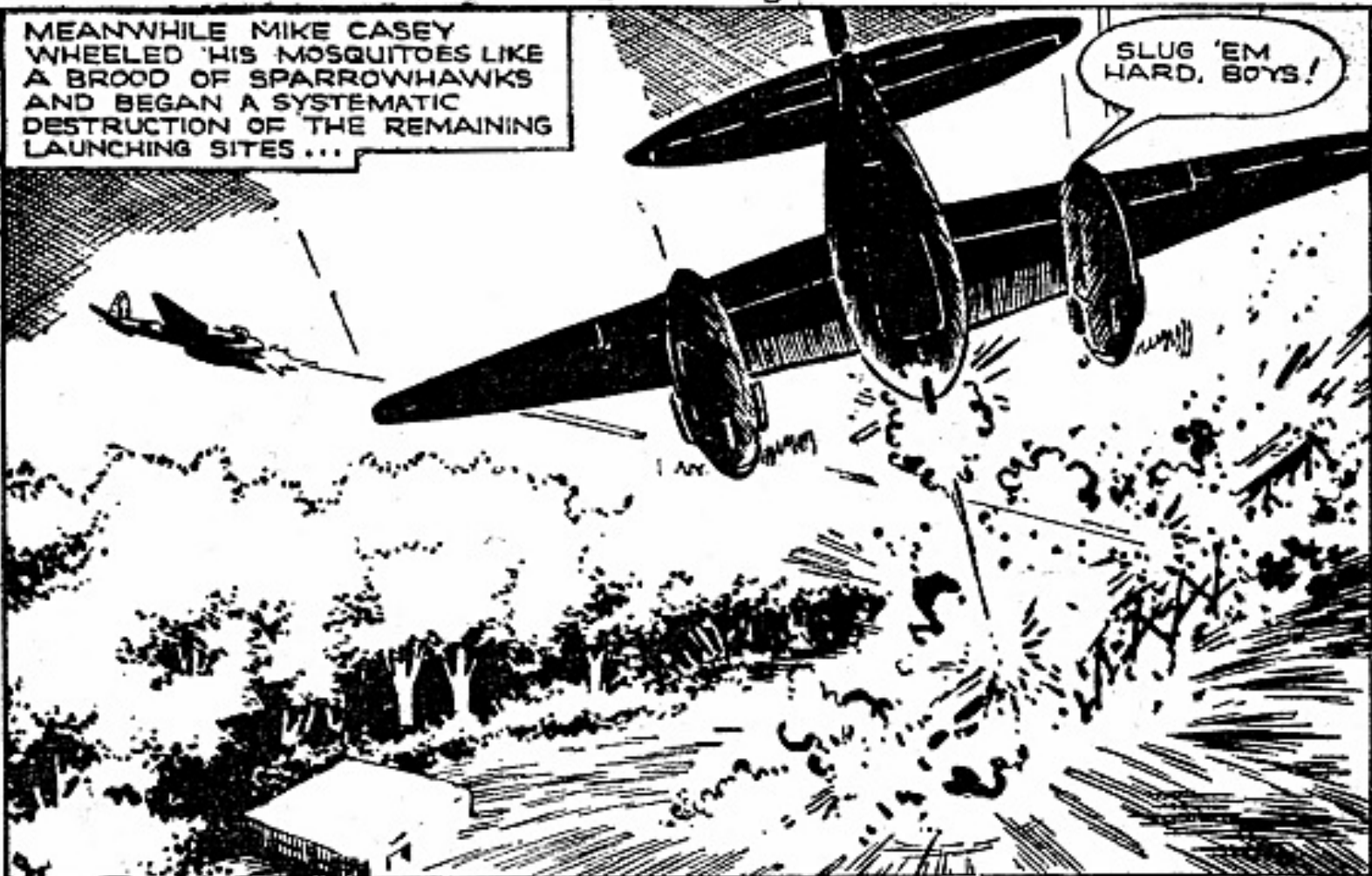
IN THE FACE OF THE FEROCIOUS COUNTER ATTACK, THE GERMANS FELL BACK, AND BACK...

OUT OF MY WAY!



MEANWHILE MIKE CASEY
WHEELED HIS MOSQUITOES LIKE
A BROOD OF SPARROWHAWKS
AND BEGAN A SYSTEMATIC
DESTRUCTION OF THE REMAINING
LAUNCHING SITES ...

SLUG 'EM
HARD, BOYS!



ON THE NEXT SITE, THE POWER-
PUNCHING SIX-POUNDERS CAUGHT
A FLYING-BOMB JUST CRADLED
FOR THE TAKE-OFF ...

WHOOOPS!



THE RAVAGING WENT ON WITHOUT MERCY.
STREAM AFTER STREAM OF FIERY
SHELLS SPLIT OPEN THE BLOCK-HOUSES...

... SET FIRE TO
PETROL DUMPS...

... AND PLOUGHED INTO
BURIED STOCKPILES OF
MORE FLYING BOMBS.

NOT UNTIL HE SAW THE
WHOLE FLYING-BOMB
BATTERY COLLAPSE IN
ITS OWN SMOKE AND
DEBRIS WAS MIKE
CASEY SATISFIED ...

THEY ASKED
FOR THAT...
AND THEY
SURE GOT IT!

BY NOW CAPTAIN ROKER'S MEN HAD REACHED THE SAND DUN, LEADING TO THE BEACH AND THE WAITING BOATS. THEY WERE ALMOST THERE WHEN...

LOOK, SIR - JERRIES! HUNDREDS OF THEM!

LOOKS LIKE A FRESH FORCE! THEY'LL BE A TOUGH PROPOSITION!

PURSUED AND HARRIED, THE PARATROOPERS ARRIVED PANTING AT THE BEACH...

HOLD IT, SAILOR!

WAIT, THERE'S MORE COMING!




THEN, JUST AS THEIR PURSUERS WERE ALMOST UPON THEM, THEY HEARD THE SCREAM OF TEMPEST FIGHTERS AND THE HAMMERING STUTTER OF BRITISH MACHINE-GUNS. FREDDIE SAWYER HAD ARRIVED WITH TIM'S SQUADRON...

BACK, YOU BOCHE!
GET BACK!



LASHED BY SUCCESSIVE BURSTS OF BULLETS,
THE GERMANS' TRIUMPHANT PURSUIT
TURNED INTO A SHAMBLES...

ROUND AGAIN,
CHAPS!



DOWN
FOR YOUR
LIVES!

ROKER'S MEN PILED ABOARD THE BOATS AND LOOKED BACK WITH DELIGHTED GRINS. NO-ONE HAD TO TELL TIM MURRAY WHO THEIR SAVIORS WERE.



SAFELY ABOARD A NAVAL TORPEDO BOAT SPEEDING BACK TO ENGLAND, TIM RADIOED FREDDIE SAWYER AND THE CIRCLING TEMPESTS...



TIM MURRAY LOOKED BACK AT THE TWO ESCORTING SQUADRONS AND FELT A GREAT SURGE OF PRIDE AND RELIEF...

THAT SURE WAS A PARTY, TIM!

WIZARD SHOW!

SEE YOU IN THE MESS, SKIPPER!

FOR TIM, THE LONG STRAIN WAS OVER. PLUTO WAS SAVED, AND THE MENACE OF HITLER'S EVIL FLYING-BOMBS HAD FELT THE FIRST OF THE PUNCHES THAT WOULD EVENTUALLY DELIVER THE KNOCKOUT BLOW!

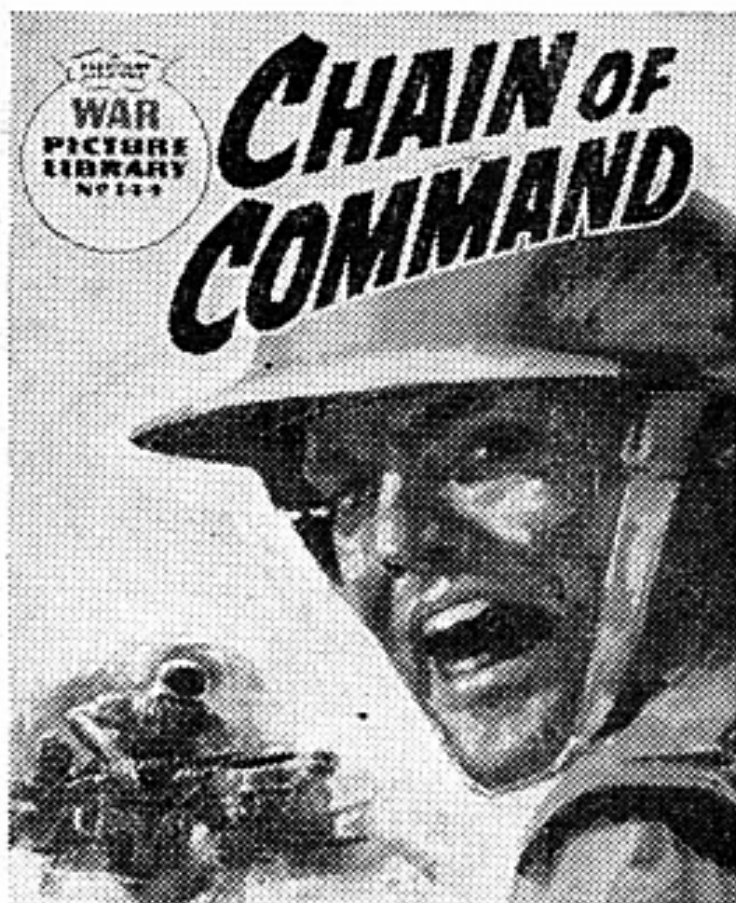
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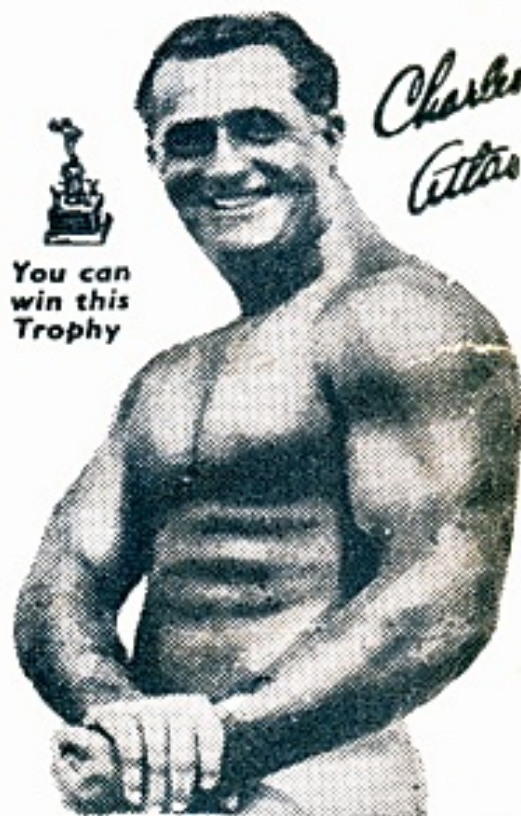
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